ABSTRACT

AN EQUIPPING MODEL APPLIED TO

VALLEY CHAPEL FREE METHODIST CHURCH

by

Todd W. Daningburg

The project purposed to equip people for ministry at Valley Chapel Free Methodist Church. The research measured the effectiveness of the equipping model from *The Equipping Church Guidebook* by Sue Mallory and Brad Smith. The model's effectiveness was evaluated using a congregational survey that measured nine outcomes of the equipping model. The research was an evaluative study in the experimental mode utilizing a pre-, mid-, and posttest design with no comparison group. Significant change was observed in all nine outcomes. The findings demonstrate a positive relationship between the equipping model and becoming an equipping church.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this project in memory of my father, Mendel F. Daningburg, who devoted his life to God, family, and ministry, and instilled a passion for them in my heart.

CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Understanding the Problem

I became the pastor of the Valley Chapel Free Methodist Church in Warsaw, New York, in 1992. Sunday morning worship attendance averaged 101 that year. The church increased in size to over two hundred attendees in 2001. During this period I became increasingly concerned with how to minister adequately to this growing body while maintaining an outward focus of evangelism and outreach to the community. I desired to equip people for service, help them discover their spiritual gifts, and deploy them into ministry. However, a few overworked leaders were often burdened with a disproportionate amount of the ministry responsibilities while a large segment of the church participated minimally in ministry. Some of those most heavily involved often continued to serve out of a sense of guilt and obligation rather than a sense of joy, enthusiasm, and calling. This experience of a few carrying the responsibility for most of the ministry occurs commonly in churches. "Often a company or a church consists of a few hassled, harried leaders and a great many take-it-easy followers.. . . No great leader can live long in this condition" (Miller 158).

I have long desired to build an infrastructure within the local church that utilizes believers' gifts for ministry and allows them to serve God in the church and the world with joy, enthusiasm, and purpose. The relief for leaders would be surpassed by the gratification that would come to those engaged in vital, life-changing, purposeful ministry perhaps for the first time in their lives. Ultimately, the church would be able to achieve more of God's purpose bringing glory to him through changed lives and a transformed community.

Valley Chapel experienced a scriptural based funding campaign in the fall of 1995 called, "Giving, Building, and Sharing Christ Together." The fund-raising campaign enabled the church to raise over four times its annual budget over a three-year period for the purpose of relocating and building a new ministry facility. The capital campaign was one of the most challenging and gratifying experiences of my tenure at Valley Chapel. The philosophy of the funding campaign was to train people in understanding and practicing biblical stewardship and involve them in some facet of the campaign based on their gifts, interests, and sense of calling. People were individually recruited to serve, given clear expectations for their roles, trained for their unique area of involvement, and received the vision of the capital campaign through various means at training events, at worship services, and through small groups. One man who was invited to serve on the steering committee of the campaign testified at an early meeting, "I figured it was time I got off my butt and did something worthwhile for God." Perhaps many in the church feel the same way about ministry who would eagerly serve if equipped and given the opportunity. The capital campaign was not only successful in raising funds but also in raising the level of stewardship of time, talents, gifts, and resources of all the participants. The whole body united together behind the effort, owned the ministry, experienced fulfillment, and ultimately enjoyed the satisfaction of accomplishing its purpose.

The experience of the capital campaign is a microcosm of how the Church as a whole should function. Valley Chapel equipped people for ministry in one major area of the church's life. Equipping people for ministry for a segment of time in a significant area of ministry—stewardship—was a blessing to the church family. A large portion of the congregation was engaged in the ministry of the campaign. Many testified that the experience of being personally involved in the campaign accelerated their spiritual

growth. This enthusiastic response is not unexpected when laypeople are fully functioning in ministry according to their gifts:

> Lay initiative, sense of responsibility, and full-hearted participation are necessary to ensure the proper religious development of the laymen themselves; that is to say, to ensure growth in Christian knowledge, in faith, in Christlike character, in genuine serviceableness to others, and, as a result, in contagious influence and propagating power. (Mott 44)

Rapid and dynamic spiritual and numerical growth and increased giving resulted from having equipped laity involved in the ministry of the capital campaign. This experience provides evidence of improved church health and mission when people are involved in ministry. The leadership needs to develop a similar pattern throughout all the ministries of Valley Chapel.

The literature on lay ministry suggests that developing a sustained equipping model for the church is challenging but not impossible. Equipping is "a biblical concept that is easy to understand but difficult to implement" (Bugbee 7). The early Church functioned according to the gifts of all the members. Everyone was called to ministry and given spiritual gifts enabling them to fulfill their calling. "All Christians were called to the ministry, whether they were tentmakers or slaves" (Robinson 19). Unfortunately, many pastors and laypeople tend to underestimate the role of the laity and overestimate the role of the clergy. An unhealthy dichotomy between clergy and laity has developed over the last two thousand years that is difficult to overcome. "The relationships between clergy and laity over the years has built chronic overfunctioning into the role of the clergy and underfunctioning into the role of the laity" (Mead, *Five Challenges* 12). Characteristic of this mentality is the response of a layperson when asked about carrying out a new ministry: "I'm just a layperson." The New Testament contradicts this kind of thinking. "'Laity,' in its proper New Testament sense of *laos*—the people of God—is a

term of great honour denoting the enormous privilege and mission of the whole people of God" (Stevens 5). "The biblical emphasis is not on the 'omnicompetent' pastor, but a 'multigifted' body" (Ogden 75).

The clergy/laity dichotomy may be traced, in part, to a historic misapplication of the Greek word *laikos* (root of the word "laity") to the people of God in the Church who are not ordained to pastoral ministry. *Laikos* refers to the "uneducated masses" (Garlow 41) or someone who is ignorant or not a specialist in a particular subject. The word *laikos*, with its negative connotation, does not appear in the New Testament.

Another similar word, *laos*, does appear in the New Testament and generally means "the people of God." This word is full of optimistic significance and includes all of God's people, both those ordained to pastoral leadership and those with a variety of other gifts who are also called to serve God. "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms" (1 Pet. 4:10). Garlow writes about the privilege of being a part of the *laos*. "The next time you hear someone say, 'Oh, but I am just a layperson,' congratulate him or her on the tremendous honor of being one of God's people" (Garlow 41).

A particular group of people within the *laos* have a "specialized" or "representative" ministry responsibility. Their functions include "making it possible for all God's people to minister" and "helping and assisting laypersons with their respective ministries" (Garlow 42). Those with a "specialized" ministry are often referred to as "clergy." The word clergy derives from the Greek *kleros*, meaning "a 'lot,' or a 'portion' of something—'a part,' a selected part, a separate part" (51). The assumption is that in the New Testament, *kleros* signifies a special and distinct group of people; however, Garlow notes that "every time these two words, *kleros* and *laos*, appear they apply to the

same people—to that portion of all humanity that walks with God" (51). Therefore, the Bible does not make the distinction the Church has since come to identify between the professional "clergy" and the non-professional "laity."

Laypeople are honored as vital to the work of the Church in the New Testament. The distinction between a "professional" class of Christians and an "underclass" of common, ordinary Christians is unfounded biblically. "The clergy-laity dichotomy . . . grew up as an accident of church history and actually marked a drift away from biblical faithfulness" (Snyder, *Community* 95). The literature critiques the Church's practice of creating a super class of Christians solely responsible for carrying out ministry:

> We have robbed the church of its power by identifying sacramental presence with a few!. . . The holy presence of Christ is in his whole body. Each one in whom Christ dwells is a channel through whom he mediates his presence. To lift up a few is to denigrate the whole. Each person bears a charism of God's action and all together make up the dwelling place of God. (Ogden 79)

Today, many clergy overvalue their own role and responsibility and underestimate the authority and competence of the laity. "Some leaders harbor exaggerated ideas about their own omnicompetence, or their own indispensability, or they have trouble trusting other people, or they are reluctant to let go of control and give someone the authority that fits the responsibility" (Hunter, *Leading* 92). Hence, such leaders hamper the process required to give the ministry back to the laity. Likewise, many laity minimize the importance of their role in ministry. They have been in a position of receiving ministry for so long they cannot conceive of anything else. "It is hard to move people from a consumer mind-set to a servant lifestyle when so much in their world militates against this transition" (Mallory and Smith 15). The denial by clergy and laity alike of the universal ministry of the body of Christ has led to what Yoder calls "the

disenfranchisement of the 'laity'" (37).

The unhealthy dichotomy between the clergy and the laity hampers the effective mission of the Church. Valley Chapel, and every church that is committed to fulfilling its biblically mandated mission, must take seriously the role of the laity as ministers in the Church and the world. Such churches will necessarily develop an intentional plan for instructing laity in the biblical basis for ministry helping them identify their gifts for ministry, deploying them into ministry, and offering ongoing support and encouragement. This will require "*nothing less than the radical transformation of the self-perception of all believers so we see ourselves as vital channels through whom God mediates his life to other members of the body of Christ and the world* [original emphasis]" (Ogden 12).

Congregational Context

Valley Chapel Free Methodist Church is located in Warsaw, Wyoming County, New York. Warsaw is a rural county seat town with a population of 5,423. Wyoming County has 43,424 residents (U. S. Census Bureau). The church was founded in 1920. For the first fifty years of its existence, the church fluctuated in attendance between fifty and seventy-five. In 1973, the church split over theological issues pertaining to Pentecostalism. The pastor left with a majority of the congregation. Less than ten active parishioners remained. The conference superintendent was encouraged to close the church; however, through a series of bi-vocational and student pastors, the church remained open. The church began to grow significantly between 1978 and 1983 under the leadership of a bi-vocational pastor and an influx of a new group of dedicated and involved Christians, primarily young families. A full-time pastor was appointed to serve Valley Chapel in 1983. In 1985, the church underwent a change of appointment and the new pastor remained seven years. The church fluctuated in growth between eighty and

one hundred people. During that time, the congregation purchased a house across the street from the church for additional Christian education space.

I was appointed as pastor to the Valley Chapel in 1992. One of the characteristics of the church that attracted me to come to Warsaw was that the people were eager to reach the community. The church was located in a neighborhood with little visibility, no room to grow or expand, and a poorly functional facility. The leadership was willing to consider options for creating an environment that would be more visible, attractive, and inviting to the population of the community that was not yet reached by the gospel.

Early in my tenure, the church addressed issues that limited its ability to expand its ministry further into the community. In the fall of 1992, the church developed a leadership structure that placed the people responsible for various areas of ministry (Christian education director, trustee chairperson, treasurer, etc.) together on a leadership team. This leadership team was responsible for administrative decisions, programming, and planning. The leadership team identified a clear purpose statement for the church: "The purpose of Valley Chapel is to make disciples by reaching people for Christ, establishing them in the faith, and preparing them for service." The mission statement derived from Jesus' Great Commission in Matthew 28. Making disciples consists of winning the lost to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ (*reaching people for Christ*), discipleship, or teaching converts to understand and be obedient to the Word of God (*establishing them in the faith*), and equipping believers to serve the Lord according to the call he has placed on their lives and the gifts he has given them (*preparing them for service*).

Through several months in 1994-1995, leaders researched the issue of how the facility limited the church's ability to fulfill its purpose to "make disciples." The leaders

concluded that in order to fully carry out the mission, the church needed to relocate to a larger, expandable facility on a visible thoroughfare in the community. The church undertook the process of planning, funding, and completing this relocation. Valley Chapel purchased seven acres on Route 19 (South Main Street), raised over $400,000, and built a 12,500 square foot facility between 1995 and 1997. The church met for worship in its new facility for the first time on 1 June 1997. Other developments occurred simultaneously. In 1994 the church added a part-time office secretary and, in 1995, a half-time associate pastor whose main responsibility was in the area of Christian education. In January 2002, Valley Chapel hired its first full-time associate pastor with responsibility to oversee outreach, discipleship, and equipping ministries. During this time, the church grew from 101 in morning worship attendance in 1992 to 125 in 1995 to 168 in 1997, the year the church moved into its new facility. In 2002, morning worship attendance averaged 244.

Prior to this study, the church encouraged me to participate in Asbury Theological Seminary's Beeson Institute for Advanced Biblical Leadership. Valley Chapel provided the financial resources and the time to complete the program (nine modules) between 1997 and 1999. One of the modules was held at Saddleback Church in Orange County, California, led by Pastor Rick Warren. Warren's purpose driven baseball diamond model of discipleship (*Purpose Driven Church* 130), inspired Valley Chapel to incorporate the purpose of the church, making disciples, into every area of ministry. The church accomplished this by transitioning the roles and responsibilities of the leadership team. Rather than electing people to hold an office, leaders are selected to oversee ministry areas related to the church's purpose based on their spiritual gifts and passion. The leadership core is made up of a team of people selected to represent and oversee the

various areas of the church's purpose. The outreach leader oversees the aspect of the purpose to *reach people for Christ.* The discipleship leader oversees the ministries focused on *establishing people in the faith and preparing them for service.* The church continues to maintain administrative leaders on the team to oversee finances, facility, and conference relationship (delegate). Two new positions were added to represent the ministry areas of worship and congregational care.

As the church grew, developing the means to involve everyone in meaningful ministry became necessary. In a variety of church settings, the attitude that laypeople should receive ministry and pastors should produce ministry as the one hired to care for the congregation's spiritual needs is common. Unfortunately, this attitude develops a dependency model of ministry in which pastors compromise the value of being an equipper in order to accommodate the needs presented by the laity. The laypeople affirm the pastor's ministry to them and for them, which can be deceptively gratifying. By ministering out of a desire to gratify the laity, pastors may inadvertently neglect their purpose to equip the saints for the work of ministry (Eph. 4:11-12). The laity, in turn, miss out on the fulfillment of being used significantly by God to minister on his behalf, limiting their spiritual growth and compromising the church's mission to reach the community for Christ.

With growth comes change. A church of one hundred functions differently than a church of two hundred and fifty. The church's pace of growth created a need for developing an intentional, adequate process for moving people forward in their spiritual journey from seeker to server in the church. Tumblin refers to the "discipleship gap," a term identified by Howard Snyder, that often occurs in growing churches: "[a] chasm widened between the attendance count and the number of fully committed disciples" (2).

The importance of guiding people in Christian growth can be overwhelmed by the numerical increase in a growing church. Valley Chapel was at an opportune time to assess and develop the church's ability to equip and release the laity for ministry.

The congregation had adapted to the numerous transitions of the last twelve years exceptionally well. Some of Valley Chapel's strengths include acceptance of new people, flexibility, and openness to change. Such adaptability is crucial for transitioning to an equipping church. "Once a church is functioning as a culture and a system that is alive for Christ, she will only remain so if she is continually open to change and adaptation" (Mallory 56). Relocation, the development of purpose, the addition of support and ministry staff, and the changes in leadership structures and ministry focus helped the church reflect a more biblical, purposeful model of ministry. At the outset of this study, the church was ready and eager to experience greater understanding of the ministry of all believers and the resulting practical implications for the church structure and ministry. Through the implementation of the project, they made further changes that contribute to the church's stated purpose of "making disciples."

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the changes in a congregation that result from participating in a program designed to equip the laity for the work of ministry. A model for equipping ministry from *The Equipping Church Guidebook* was implemented at Valley Chapel Free Methodist Church (Mallory and Smith). The model's effectiveness for equipping the laity for ministry in the local church was evaluated.

Description of the Project

The project was an eighteen-month intervention using the equipping model from *The Equipping Church Guidebook* by Sue Mallory and Brad Smith as a resource to help

Valley Chapel Free Methodist Church become an "equipping church." The project consisted of incorporating numerous means and methods in the life of Valley Chapel to develop equipping culture and systems within the church. The equipping model is adaptable to the unique setting of each church. "Every church that seeks to follow the biblical pattern will produce an original version" (Mallory 104). Churches utilize the *Guidebook* to help develop a tailor-made strategy unique to their situation rather than simply copy ideas that work elsewhere. "*The Equipping Church Guidebook* is designed to provide a framework so that each church can develop her own solutions" (Mallory and Smith 15). The project utilized the *Guidebook* model as a tool to develop a unique equipping culture and system appropriate to the context of Valley Chapel Free Methodist Church.

The vision for developing an equipping church is that God has called every believer to take part in fulfilling his mission to make disciples (Matt. 28:19-20). Throughout the centuries, a two-tiered view of believers has developed that separates the professionals (ordained clergy) from the novices (the non-ordained laity). This paradigm overstates the role of the ordained as those who do ministry and understates the role of the laity as those who receive ministry. In reality, the clergy are a part of the people of God. The clergy's primary role is to prepare the people of God to do their ministry.

The goal of the project was to equip and involve the laypeople in ministry resulting in collective spiritual growth, maturity, and health. "The end goal is not activity for activity's sake, but maturity. Our goal is not about individual growth, but about group growth. This is whole-church, community discipleship" (Mallory and Smith 14). The hope was that this project would result in a congregation that is healthier, more spiritually mature, and more effective in fulfilling its purpose of making disciples. The desire was

that the laity would realize their call and gifting for ministry and be mobilized to carry out their ministry effectively, and that the pastors would concentrate on their purpose to "prepare God's people for works of service" as found in Ephesians 4. "Most churches uphold Ephesians 4:11-16 as the primary passage to define . . . the purpose of the *leaders* [original emphasis] of the church" (Mallory and Smith 23). The desire was to enable all members of the body of Christ, whether clergy or laity, to better understand and fulfill their ministry.

Equipping Culture

One of the goals of the project was to develop an internal culture of equipping at Valley Chapel. "Culture is the environment of expectations, values, and often-unwritten rules that surround everything your church does. Your church's culture powerfully determines people's actions and their acceptance or rejection of new things" (Mallory and Smith 61). Equipping ministry must not be seen as an addition to the rest of what the church does. Equipping must become part of the identity of the church. "It is a way of doing and being the church" (Mallory 21). The church culture must accept the value of lay ministry in order to return to the biblical priority of equipping.

One of the keys to embodying equipping values as part of the church's culture is a clear vision for developing an equipping ministry. The vision for equipping was communicated to the entire church family through a variety of means, including sermons on equipping and ministry, retreats, creative arts presentations that highlighted the value of ministry, newsletter articles, and personal testimonies of the joy of doing ministry and the blessing of receiving ministry from others. The staff and key lay leaders also embodied the values and vision of equipping ministry, a key characteristic shared by equipping churches (Mallory and Smith 60). Additionally, the pastors provided training

for lay leaders at leadership meetings and retreats to help them learn and embody equipping values in their roles. As pastoral leaders equipped and shared responsibility with ministry leaders, the ministry leaders were encouraged to equip and share responsibility for ministry with those who served in their areas. The church also added ministries and events that celebrate equipping values, including ministry fairs, a *Network* class on spiritual gifts (Bugbee, Cousins, Hybels, and Seidman), and training for all laity involved or interested in ministry.

Even though many reasons existed for nudging the culture along toward an equipping ministry mind-set, some facets of an equipping culture were already in place. The church already had a strong sense of its purpose. Before implementing an equipping ministry "you must engage in this important foundational work of clarifying the timeless purpose of the church" (Mallory and Smith 22). Valley Chapel's purpose from the Great Commission, as stated in the *Congregational Context* above, was to "make disciples by reaching people for Christ, establishing them in the faith, and preparing them for service." At the outset of the project, the church clarified its purpose by adding two new concepts that were already a significant part of its ministry, although not reflected in the original purpose statement. Taking from Jesus' Great Commandment to "love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength . . . and your neighbor as yourself" in Mark 12:30-31, the church added the components of "worship" (loving God) and "loving relationships" (loving neighbor). Now, the purpose is expressed as follows: "The purpose of Valley Chapel is to make disciples by worshiping God whole-heartedly, fostering loving relationships, reaching people for Christ, teaching them to live by God's Word, and equipping them to serve God."

The leadership team was realigned to match the stated purpose of the church.

Instead of electing people to ministry positions that would place them on a leadership team that would make all the ministry decisions, administrative responsibilities were separated from other ministry responsibilities. A new Administration Team was formed to oversee ongoing operational needs of the church including general policies, procedures, planning, facility, staffing, and financial oversight. The ministry leaders (worship, care, outreach, discipleship, and equipping) began to work within a new framework in which each individual was empowered to make decisions within his or her area of ministry, including the formation of new ministries, the recruitment and development of lay volunteers, and expenditures, as long as their decisions were in line with the purpose of the church and the established budgetary guidelines. The ministry leaders were freed from being involved in other boards and committees in order to focus their time, energy, and gifts within their individual areas of ministry. Decision-making was streamlined and deferred to the persons actually responsible for the ministry.

Equipping System

Another goal of the equipping church is to develop an intentional system that effectively moves people forward in their spiritual growth from the moment they enter the doors of the church. The equipping system is "a comprehensive system that includes preparation and development of members, thorough communication systems, staff support and involvement, and celebration of success" (Mallory and Smith 61). The church must fulfill its mission to make disciples by helping people come to Christ, teaching them the biblical understanding of ministry and gifts, and preparing them to serve Christ according to their gifts in the church and the world. Pastors and churches often fail to build the necessary organizational structure to support the proclaimed vision. Great vision requires a good game plan for applying vision in the life of the church:

> A complete system involves new and existing members, sets the context for service, supports a discovery process, matches members to service based on their gifts, places members in ministry opportunities, provides coaching for their involvement, and celebrates service as an avenue of spiritual growth. (60)

The fact that people come from a variety of backgrounds, ages, experiences, and levels of spirituality must be taken into account when creating and implementing the equipping ministry systems. "The key to application is to create a system that allows each person to navigate the complete process with clear, identifiable 'next steps'" (Mallory and Smith 60).

Research Questions

1. What understanding and experience of equipping ministry characterize the congregation prior to the implementation of *The Equipping Church Guidebook* equipping model?

2. What changes occur in the congregation's understanding and experience of equipping ministry subsequent to the implementation of *The Equipping Church Guidebook* equipping model?

3. What elements of *The Equipping Church Guidebook* model contributed to the congregation's understanding and experience of equipping ministry?

4. What other intervening variables might correlate with the observed changes in the congregation's understanding and experience of equipping ministry?

Definition of Terms

The following definitions attempt to clarify the focus of the project.

Priesthood of All Believers

The priesthood of all believers is based on 1 Peter 2:9, which says, "But you are a chosen people, a *royal priesthood* [emphasis mine], a holy nation, a people belonging to

God." This verse represents the biblical concept that under the new covenant, a "priestly office" whereby people come to God no longer exists. Jesus is the great high priest by which all believers may approach God (Heb. 4:14). Ministry is the obligation of all the people of God, not merely the "religious professionals." Every member in the body of Christ is gifted and called into ministry.

Universal Ministry

Universal ministry is based on the biblical concept of the "priesthood of all believers." Universal ministry means that ministry is not limited to a select few individuals who are professionally trained and qualified to do ministry. Ministry, or the service that followers of Christ render on his behalf, is expected of all believers, both the clergy and laity.

Equipping Ministry

Mallory and Smith define equipping ministry as "essentially building an internal culture that values gift-based service then creating ways to help people move from where they are now to where they should be" (15). Equipping ministry helps people to understand and use their spiritual gifts in every area of their lives. When practiced pervasively in the church, this leads to group maturity. "The end goal is not activity for activity's sake, but maturity. Our goal is not about individual growth, but about group growth. This is whole-church, community discipleship" (14). Equipping ministry is not merely a program but is a model for practicing the biblical priority of "preparing God's people for works of service" (Eph. 4:12) in all areas of the church's life.

Equipping Church

An equipping church is one that has developed a pervasive culture of equipping ministry through every facet of congregational life. Systems and strategies to equip

people for ministry operate to move people from pre-Christian experience, to faith in Christ, to a growing understanding of Christian experience, including God's call and empowerment for service for each believer, to the actual practice, affirmation, and evaluation of ministry on the part of every believer.

Spiritual Gifts

Spiritual gifts are divinely ordained tools for ministry. They are distributed by God's grace and determination to all within the body of Christ for a specific purpose. "Each gift is autonomous and different, yet functions on behalf of the entire body, not the person with the gift" (Easum 45).

Methodology

The project was an evaluative study in the experimental mode that utilized a researcher-designed instrument. The instrument measured the congregation's understanding and experience of equipping ministry before, during, and after the implementation of *The Equipping Church Guidebook* model (see Appendix C). This project employed a single-group interrupted time series quasi-experimental design, diagrammed in Figure 1.1.

The Os represent pre-, mid-, and posttesting of people's understanding and experience of equipping ministry in the church. The Xs represents the implementation of the equipping church model from *The Equipping Church Guidebook.* Also, at the end of the study semi-structured interviews (Y) were conducted with six church leaders to contribute a perspective from qualitative research (see Appendix D). The interviews addressed the following issues: Did the program affect the leaders' understanding of equipping ministry? Was the process perceived as contributing to the health and vitality of the church? Did the leaders experience personal benefits from the project?

$$O_1 \text{ --- } X \text{ ---- } O_2 \text{ --- } X \text{ ---- } O_3 \; Y$$

Figure 1.1. Single Group Interrupted Time Series Quasi-Experimental Design

Population

The population for this study was made up of adults 18 and over who regularly attend worship (twice per month or more) at Valley Chapel Free Methodist Church. For the purposes of this study, population and sample were identical. The instrument was made available to the entire population of active participants (attend worship twice per month or more) in the life of the church. The goal was to get as wide a variety of types of respondents as possible within the framework of active participants.

Variables

The independent variable of this research project is *The Equipping Church Guidebook* equipping model. The model was implemented sequentially beginning in fall 2001. Initially, an understanding of equipping ministry was developed among the leadership team at a leadership retreat. The congregation was simultaneously introduced to the concepts of equipping ministry through a sermon series on lay ministry and the role of the clergy and the laity. Throughout the winter of 2001-2002, processes were initiated for building teams and integrating roles. In spring and summer 2002 support systems were developed for the final phase of the model's implementation. By March 2003, the final aspects of the equipping church model were largely implemented for preparing, connecting, and equipping people in ministry.

The dependent variables of this study are the cognitive and behavioral changes

experienced by the congregation in relation to equipping ministry. Intervening variables that might influence or help explain outcomes include age, number of years attending Valley Chapel, and level of involvement in ministry at the outset of the study.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

A researcher-designed survey (see Appendix C) was the primary instrument used to measure the effects of *The Equipping Church Guidebook* model (see Appendix A) on equipping ministry in the life of the congregation. The equipping ministry survey is a pencil-and-paper instrument with forty-five statements measured on a five point Likert scale. Nine outcomes of the equipping model were identified (see Appendix B). Five questions were developed for each of the nine outcomes to determine the success level at which each outcome was achieved. Statement one deals with the first outcome, the second statement addresses outcome two, and so on. The pattern repeats itself throughout the survey.

The first survey served as a pretest to provide a baseline reading on the respondent's knowledge and experience regarding equipping ministry. The second survey was conducted at the midpoint of the implementation of the equipping model (nine months) to evaluate progress in the development of an equipping culture and systems. The final survey was administered in the eighteenth month of the implementation of the model. The survey was administered to individuals to "take home" and complete on their own. The instrument was given in September 2001, June 2002, and March 2003.

Confidentiality was assured by the use of respondent-created codes. At the administration of the survey, the respondents were instructed to re-create the same code. This method of coding allowed for observation of changes in the individual respondents as well as progress of the entire population over time.

For the semi-structured interviews, six subjects were met individually at a prearranged time and place to conduct the interviews. Interviews were tape recorded, transcribed, and then subjected to qualitative data analysis (see Appendix D).

Delimitations

The study focused on the Valley Chapel congregation's understanding and experience of equipping ministry as the very core of who they are from 1 September 2001 to 2 March 2003. The study measured the effectiveness of *The Equipping Church Guidebook* equipping model in the local church during that eighteen-month period (Mallory and Smith). The entire group of adults who attend worship services regularly (twice per month or more) made up the population of this study.

The Equipping Church Guidebook equipping model is the chosen format (independent variable) for this study. Assessment of quantitative measurements was accomplished through the researcher-designed *Equipping Ministry Survey* (see Appendix C). Additional qualitative measurement was achieved through the use of two open-ended questions on the surveys, semi-structured interviews (see Appendix D), and field notes.

Generalizability

The findings of the study have direct implications for the Valley Chapel Free Methodist Church. Generalizations about other churches are possible and desirable. Hopefully, other churches utilizing the *Equipping Church Guidebook* model for developing an equipping ministry will experience similar results. One possible approach for future study would be to include more churches in the research to provide stronger verification of the results.

Overview of the Study

The study attempts to show a positive correlation between the implementation of

The Equipping Church Guidebook equipping model and a fully functioning equipping ministry in the life of the local church. Chapter 2 lays the biblical and theological groundwork for understanding equipping ministry. The research design is presented in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 reports the research findings. The final chapter summarizes and interprets the research findings.

CHAPTER 2

PRECEDENTS IN THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The biblical foundations for developing the theology of an equipping ministry in the local church include a brief overview of the Old Testament's perspective on ministry. Several New Testament principles are considered including the new priesthood, the work of the Holy Spirit, *diakonia*, the Great Commission, and the use of the words *laos* and *kleros*. Ephesians 4, a key passage on equipping laity for ministry is explored. The Church's historic perspective on ministry is then considered, emphasizing critical events that shaped its understanding and practice of ministry. The final section discusses the Church's current view of ministry and concludes with implications of this study on the Church today.

Biblical Overview: Old Testament

At the time of God's call to Abram, the Lord told him, "All peoples on earth will be blessed through you" (Gen. 12:3). God is concerned for the whole world, and its redemption is his intended purpose. God's design in choosing Abram was to utilize him, through his offspring, as the means by which to express his purpose of grace, love, and redemption for the whole world. "In choosing Israel, God holds fast to His purpose with the world" (Kraemer 129). The blessing promised to Abraham extends beyond his descendants to include all people.

In time, the development of this promise is seen in the deliverance of Abraham's descendants from bondage in Egypt. God speaks through his servant Moses to his people: "Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exod. 19:5b-6). This statement is key for understanding that all God's people

have a role in his commitment to reach the world. A whole nation of people is called to serve as priests to the world of which it is a part. By his grace, God set apart Israel from the rest of the world. They were to be God's agent in the world—his avenue to reach everyone. The whole world is special to God so he called a special people from among the nations to be his instrument to reach everyone. "Under the Old Testament the entire people were called to belong to God, to be God's people and to serve God's purposes" (Stevens 38). A priestly group of people existed within the nation of Israel dedicated to serving God; however, their service was to enable the ministry of all the people to the world. "Israel's commission from Yahweh involved all the people, not just a select few, as priests. What they learned about him as they served him was to be shared with others" (McNeal 37). Isaiah speaks to all the people when he says, "And you will be called priests of the Lord, you will be named ministers of our God" (Isa. 61:6).

Soon after the deliverance from Egypt, Moses, the ultimate "professional religionist" (Yoder 1), found himself overwhelmed trying to serve as sole judge of the people. Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, sagely warned, "What you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone" (Exod. 18:17-18). Moses heeded Jethro's advice and organized a group of capable men to serve as community leaders over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens to assist in serving the needs of the whole nation of Israel.

God also raised up "laymen" with special gifts for preparing the tabernacle. Bezalel was "filled with the Spirit of God" for this task (Exod. 31:3; 35:31). God gave him a helper, Oholiab, and additional skilled craftsmen to assist with the work (Exod. 31:6; 35:34-36:1). Bezalel and Oholiab were given the ability to teach (equip) others for

their work (Exod. 35:34).

At one point in Moses' leadership, when the people complained over lack of adequate food, he cried out to God, "I cannot carry all these people by myself; the burden is too heavy for me" (Num. 11:14). The Lord instructed Moses to bring seventy elders of the people to the Tent of Meeting where he would distribute his Spirit to them so they could share responsibility for the burden of the people. At the appointed time, two men did not show up for the meeting, but God's Spirit filled them as well. Joshua requested that Moses stop them from prophesying. "But Moses replied, 'Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put his Spirit on them!'" (Num. 11:16-29).

Moses' desire foreshadows another significant event about which Joel prophesies:

> And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on *all* [emphasis mine] people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days. (Joel 2:28-29)

The Holy Spirit came upon all the followers of Jesus who gathered at Pentecost. Peter explained the miraculous demonstration of the Spirit as a fulfillment of the Joel prophecy (Acts 2:14-18). Now, truly, God's Spirit abides in all his people for sharing the "burden" of ministry that Moses longed to have in his day.

Within Israel, "religious professionals," known as priests and Levites, had responsibility for specific ministries to the nation. The larger body of people functioned as recipients of ministry, not practitioners, a pattern that existed in similar cultures throughout history. Yoder writes that an "anthropological constancy of the religious professional" exists in all cultures and societies: "There are few more reliable constants running through human society than the special place every human community makes for

the professional religionist" (1). "The professional is a jack-of-all-trades. He does all that needs to be done to maintain his institution" (5). The priests and Levites of the Old Testament people of God, like their counterparts in contemporaneous cultures, fulfilled this function for Israel; however, distinct differences may be noted. Yoder indicates that unlike their pagan counterparts, which focused on seasonal cycles of fertility, Israel's religious professionals guided the nation in worship commemorating the events of salvation within their history, such as Passover. Also, their sacrifices were not made to appease or feed the gods but to seek God's forgiveness and purification of their lives (7-8).

An exceptional development occurred amidst God's chosen people. From among them arose some who were not part of the priestly class by birth or initiation that ministered on God's behalf. They were known as judges and prophets. They emerged from every area of society, not primarily the priestly sector, often correcting corruption among the priests. "The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him" (Deut. 18:15). Additionally, after the conquest of the promised land, "elders" supplied effective lay leadership to the people in the city gates of the Israelite communities and later in the synagogues. Lay servants known as scribes and rabbis preserved and passed on the Word of God.

Yoder indicates how the role of Israel's professional religionists varied from those in other cultures:

> In ancient Israel and then in Judaism the function of the religionist is present, accepted, used; but it is also relativized in value and filled with new meaning. It is not central in Israel's identity; it is the point where Israel's life is most like that of the nations around, and the Hebrew story moves away from it, toward the pentecostal revolution of the new covenant. (8)

Though a strong priestly office existed in the Old Testament, other significant ministries of judge, prophet, king, and elders in the gates and synagogues helped to shape the spiritual life of the people and their role as a "kingdom of priests." "[A] special priesthood developed in Israel, and the people often lost their sense of corporate priesthood. Yet the idea persisted of the whole people as the people of God . . . especially in the prophets and some of the psalms" (Grimes 3).

Various writers indicate that in modern usage the word "layperson" conjures up an image of a person with minimal understanding and experience in a given field. "'Lay' is often a synonym for 'amateur' as opposed to 'professional,' or 'unqualified' as opposed to 'expert'" (Stott 29). Currently, lay means "unqualified to speak or judge in various fields of knowledge and science. So it has acquired the notion of 'ignorant'" (Kraemer 49). Trueblood, a layman (in the true sense of the word) in the field of medicine says satirically, "There are a good many reasons why I cannot remove my own appendix or fill the cavities in my own teeth, but there are no necessary reasons why I may not meet the Living God in prayer or help my fellow men to find Him" (*Your Other Vocation* 38).

In contrast to current usage, the biblical word from which "laity" or "layperson" is derived is the Greek *laos*. The Greek word *laikos*, meaning "of" or "belonging to the common people," does not even appear in the Bible. Originally, *laos* simply meant "the crowd" and "the people as a nation." It was employed as the designation for the "people of God" translating the Hebrew '*am* in the Septuagint (LXX) (Stevens 29) where it was used over two thousand times (Snyder, *Problem* 106). Never does the term refer to a "lower class" distinct from a "professional" group within the people of God. It simply means "all the people of God." Therefore, in the Old Testament, the Levites and priests

were just as much the *laos* as the rest of the people.

Several Old Testament texts demonstrate this use of *laos*. "But as for you, the Lord took you and brought you out of the iron smelting furnace, out of Egypt, to be the people of his inheritance" (Deut. 4:20). "For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession" (Deut. 7:6). "'So I bound the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah to me,' declares the Lord, 'to be my people for my renown and praise and honor'" (Jer. 13:11). "I will say to those called 'Not my people,' 'You are my people'; and they will say, 'You are my God'" (Hos. 2:23). "I will be their God, and they will be my people" (Ezek. 37:27). Clearly, *laos* was not a distinctive term that categorized the commoners or unschooled in distinction from the professional religionists. No spiritually elite group existed whose connection with God was exclusive of others. Religious offices of priests and Levites existed, but their role was functional, not positional. They held an office, but this did not elevate them to a position of spiritual superiority over the rest of God's people. God often chose to speak through other members of his people, in particular the judges such as Deborah, Gideon, and Samson, prophets such as Amos, and notably a shepherd named David.

Biblical Overview: New Testament

The New Testament offers a new approach to ministry unlike that of the old covenant. The role of priest is replaced by the perfect, ultimate, and final sacrifice of Jesus, the great high priest. He has eliminated the need for the priesthood of the Old Testament. "By calling this covenant 'new,' he has made the first one obsolete" (Heb. 8:13a). Another shift is that of the role of the Holy Spirit, which was given under the old covenant to only a few but is given to all the people of God under the new covenant. The

Spirit gives gifts to everyone in the Church for the work of ministry. Additionally, the new covenant calls for the active service of all Jesus' followers based on his example. Eller sums up these fundamental distinctions between the old and new covenants:

> *Ministry is based on priesthood, gifts, and servanthood* [original emphasis]. The New Testament teaches that all believers are priests (1 Pet 2:4-9), all have received spiritual gifts (Rom 12:4-8, 1 Cor 12:4-8, 1 Pet 4:10-11), and all are called to serve others as Jesus did (Mat 20:25-27, Phil 2:1-16). All three of these teachings are radical because they apply to all believers, not just the leaders, and do not admit of any fundamental distinction between "ministers and laymen." As all believers are the *laos* of God, so all are called to *diakonia*, ministry of service. (105)

In considering the New Testament perspective on ministry, these shifts are developed as well as the Great Commission, the use of *laos* and *kleros*, and a study of Ephesians 4.

The New Priesthood

Hebrews 7-10 portrays Jesus Christ as the high priest of a covenant that is "new and living" and "better" than the old. His priesthood is permanent, and the ministry of his priesthood, sacrifice for sin, does not need to be repeated. "And where these have been forgiven, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin" (10:18). Jesus' priesthood is a means by which people can enter into relationship with God the Father without the sacrifice of animals. Ogden verifies the implications of Christ's eternal priesthood and his own sacrifice for sin for all the people of God. "In the New Testament, the office of priest is eliminated as it pertains to a select group of people. This is based on the physical sacrifice of Christ, the ultimate high priest" (64).

1 Peter 2:5 and 8 speaks of the church as "a holy priesthood" and a "royal priesthood." This refers to all the people of God, the *laos*. The new covenant community takes over the role of the old covenant community as "priesthood." "Priesthood, to the extent that it applies at all in the new covenant, is the character of the entire people of

God, not of any single priestly person in the church" (Yoder 16). Revelation 1:6 echoes the words of Peter regarding the role of the people of God. Jesus "has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen."

If Jesus is the high priest and the idea of priesthood is to be applied to the whole people of God, then the existence of a priestly office as a privileged and distinct role superior to the laity is inappropriate:

> While the New Testament has no place for clergy as a separate category of believer, the Scripture has many references to leaders within God's *laos*.. . . Conspicuously missing from the list of leadership words is "priest" (hiereus), a word which until the end of the second century was reserved for Christ and the whole believing community. (Stevens 145-46)

A new priesthood of all believers under the authority and sacrifice of our great high priest, Jesus, means that an Old Testament concept of a priest as a professional religionist is obsolete and, in fact, a detriment to the ministry of all the people of God. This does not eliminate the need for leadership among the people of God; however, the new covenant leaders do not minister as priests. Their ministry is to facilitate the ministry of the priesthood of all the believers. Recovering this idea gives the Church the best opportunity to carry out its God-given purpose. "The biblical concept of the universal priesthood of believers offers the most corrective theology for challenging the contemporary North American church to choose mission over refuge" (McNeal 36).

The Holy Spirit

In the Old Testament, God gives the Holy Spirit to designated individuals to perform certain functions on specific occasions (e.g., Samson and Saul). At other times, the Holy Spirit is given indefinitely to carry out God's purpose or a ministry responsibility (e.g., Moses, Samuel, David, Elijah). The Spirit's continued presence in

their lives is contingent on obedience. The Holy Spirit is not given to all the people of God. The manifest presence of God comes to the people in three primary ways: (1) above the people at Mount Horeb, (2) before the people when traveling through the wilderness, and (3) in the midst of the people at the tabernacle and temple.

In contrast, the New Testament demonstrates that God now gives his Holy Spirit to all who put their faith in him, not just to a select few for a specific purpose. Also, his Spirit dwells within people personally and individually as well as among them corporately. "The New Testament opens up a world of universal giftedness, universal empowerment of the people of God through the gift of the Holy Spirit, universal ministry, and the universal experience of the call of God by all the people of God" (Stevens 32).

Acts 2 describes the birth of the church at Pentecost. Peter describes the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on all the gathered followers of Jesus as a fulfillment of the prophecy of "the last days" in Joel 2. The implication is that under the new covenant—made possible by the birth, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus and the sending of the Holy Spirit on believers—ministry will be entrusted to all the people of God rather than only a select few:

> The church owes its origin, its destiny, its structure, its ongoing life, its ministry—in short, its mission—to the divine Spirit of life, truth and holiness. At Pentecost, with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, promise becomes actuality. God's promised reign of love and hope, compassion and reconciliation, harmony and justice, is incarnated in a new humanity, a people commissioned to represent the gospel of peace to the alienated and hostile powers of the world. (Guder 144)

This echoes the phrase from 1 Corinthians 12:7, which says, "Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good." If the Spirit is given to each one, then each one must manifest the Spirit's presence in his or her life in a way that contributes to the good of the whole body. The Holy Spirit's presence in every believer

enables everyone to serve or minister in a way that is unique to the Spirit's gifting of his or her life. "The starting point in equipping the church for mission is the liberating truth that God is the ultimate equipper: giving vision and gifts, empowering through the Spirit's presence, motivating and guiding" (Stevens 209).

Spiritual Gifts

The Holy Spirit gives gifts to all the people of God for use in ministry. Several key passages bear this out. First Corinthians 12:1 says, "Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant." Paul goes on to describe the *diversity* of spiritual gifts (12:4, 20) given to *every* believer (12:7) according to *God's* plan (12:11, 18) for the *good of all* (12:7). "God placed each of us in His family with a certain mixture of gifts, temperaments, capabilities, and with every variation in between" (Cordeiro 65). These gifts are compared to the functioning of the human body (1 Cor. 12:12 ff). Every part is important (12:22) and no part can be left out without negatively impacting the whole. Paul emphatically concludes this analogy with the statement, "Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it" (12:27).

Romans 12 also uses the body metaphor to convey the significance of the ministry of every member. Verse 6 says, "We have different gifts, according to the grace given us." The unity of the whole is emphasized. "So in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others." The gifts are distributed for different functions, "and these members do not have the same function. We have different gifts according to the grace given us" (12:4, 6). The gifts come by God's grace. They are not earned or achieved; they are simply received from God's hand. No gifts have higher priority or greater importance. Some may be more visible, but the less prominent are no less significant. Romans 12 emphasizes that the gifts should be used: "Let him serve,

teach, encourage," etc., and that each person should have an appropriate attitude and motivation in the exercise of their gifts, i.e., "according to his faith, give generously, govern diligently, do it cheerfully" (7, 8). This model fosters health in the body. "The Body of Christ is a diversity of gifts, each one distinct and essential for the health of the Body of Christ" (Easum 45).

First Peter 4:10-11 again emphasizes that *each one* has received a gift. The gifts are to be used "to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms" (4:10). This emphasizes the variety of gifts, their source, and that they should be lived out or put into practice. The outcome of all members utilizing their gifts will be that "in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ" (4:11). The literature affirms this biblical understanding of the ministry of all the people of God according to their gifts: "Ministry is the God-given responsibility of all believers. And the Holy Spirit has prepared all of God's people for ministry by giving each one of them a special ministry gift" (Smith 354-55).

The implications for the Church are significant. Every part of the body is necessary and important. Every part of the body is given a gift to be used for God's purposes. Some have leadership gifts, some have instructional gifts, some have exhortation gifts, some have miraculous gifts, and some have helping gifts. No one person is given all the gifts. Every person has at least one gift; therefore, all in the body of Christ, the people of God, ought to be using their gifts and actively participating in ministry. "The Body of Christ is most effective when individuals are given permission to live out their God-given spiritual gifts on behalf of the Body rather than someone restraining what they can or cannot do" (Easum 10). Yoder also affirms, "Giving to each a specific *charisma* which he is to exercise as a member of the body is part of salvation

itself.. . . 'Leadership' or 'the pastorate' are examples of this rather than functions on another level" (103).

***Diakonia*: Service and Ministry**

The New Testament takes a radical new direction in its understanding of "religious professionals" such as priests, rabbis, Pharisees, Sadducees, and the Sanhedrin. Neither Jesus nor his forerunner, John the Baptist, was born of priestly lineage. Jesus chose common, ordinary men to be his closest followers. Among them were fishermen, a tax collector, and a zealot. Jesus warned his followers to avoid the errors made by the religious professionals of his day:

> You are not to be called "Rabbi," for you have only one Master and you are all brothers.. . . The greatest among you will be your servant. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. (Matt. 23:8, 11, 12)

This stands in sharp contrast to the religious leaders of his day:

> Everything they do is done for men to see.. . . They love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; they love to be greeted in the marketplaces and to have men call them "Rabbi." (Matt. 23:5a, 6, 7)

The new direction for leadership in the New Testament is that of service. Jesus wants to develop servant leaders who will assist all his followers to serve him:

> You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. (Matt. 20:25-28)

Jesus modeled this to his followers by washing their feet at the Last Supper (John 13), telling them, "I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you" (13:15). Bill Easum affirms the servant model of leadership:

> When people in authority are mentioned in the Scriptures it is because of some benefit they brought to the community, not how much power they had over others. Their authority had to do with the way they functioned instead of the office they held. The emphasis was on servanthood, not election. (61)

Jesus wants his church, the covenant community of the New Testament, to be a people who serve.

The English word "servant" usually translates the Greek word *diakonia* in the New Testament. Another translation of *diakonia* is the word "ministry." These two functions of ministry and service go hand-in-hand. Howard Snyder lists five implications regarding the New Testament's use of the words ministry and service in *Liberating the Church*:

1. Service is the basic word for Christian ministry of all kinds, not just ministry by a few select individuals;

2. Service and ministry are distinctly personal and relational. It is something rendered for something or to someone;

3. Service is directly tied to the gifts of the Spirit. "There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord" (1 Cor. 12:4-5). The practical operation of the gifts in the lives of believers is service. Gifts are given to enable service or ministry. "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms" (1 Pet. 4:10);

4. Service is tied to Jesus' servant role. Jesus demonstrated service and calls his followers to do likewise; and,

5. Service or ministry is a vital aspect of our discipleship, the practical living out of our faith as followers of Jesus Christ (133-34).

Snyder summarizes the implications of the New Testament view of ministry:

> These facets of the New Testament understanding of service underscore the fact that *all believers are called to the Christian ministry* [original emphasis]. Gifts and ministries may vary, but every Christian is called to be a servant of Christ, to minister in a Christlike way in his name. (134)

From the perspective of Jesus' ministry and his command to follow his example, Jesus desires that all his followers minister. Serving is not a function of a select few. Paul writes to the church at Philippi, "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who . . . made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant" (Phil. 2:5, 7a). The service of Jesus is an example for all his followers, not just those among his followers who are leaders. Leaders within the church "minister" or "serve" by leading others who also have responsibility to serve. Leaders are not exclusively the ministers. They are leading servants among a serving people. "The ministry is for all who are called to share in Christ's life, the pastorate is for those who possess the peculiar gift of being able to help other men and women to practice any ministry to which they are called" (Trueblood, *Incendiary* 41).

The Great Commission

The "Great Commission" of Jesus to his followers in Matthew 28:19-20 has been interpreted by the Church throughout history as a mandate for *all believers*. This is not a unique commission given to the clergy. The laity has equal responsibility for this task of taking the gospel to the world. Jesus says to all his followers, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). In fact, many writers convey that laypeople are best able to penetrate the world with the gospel message:

> If the laity of the Church, dispersed in and through the world, are really what they are called to be, the real uninterrupted dialogue between Church and world happens through them. They form the daily repeated projection of the Church into the world. They embody the meeting of the Church and

> World. (Kraemer 170)

However, the tendency is to expect people in the world to come to the Church to discover God's love through the ministry of the professional pastor. This approach undervalues the role of the laity outside the walls of the church.

Since Christ came to serve and calls his followers to do likewise, then it follows that the whole Church should be involved in service, or ministry, in some way. Also, the Great Commission has been given to the whole Church. Therefore, the whole Church should be involved in carrying it out. Mead draws together these two critically important components of service, or ministry, and the commission of all Jesus' followers:

> To be involved in the church's mission was to be sent, to be apostolic. Two themes dominated Jesus' message to his followers about that mission: (1) that every follower of Jesus was called to reach out as a caring servant to others, like Jesus himself; and (2) that the church itself was to be a community that expanded to the ends of the earth, bringing all manner of people into its life and embrace; the church was to encompass the world. (*Five Challenges* 70)

Laos* and *Kleros

The word "laity" derives from the Greek *laos*. "Clergy" comes from the Greek *kleros*. The use of both of these words in the New Testament is very different from our common understanding and use of the words in the Church today. Robinson writes, "The two words kleros [clergy] and laos [laity] appear in the New Testament, but, strange to say, they denote the same people, not different peoples" (17). Regarding the laity, Snyder writes, "All Christians are the people (laity or *laos*) of God" (*Liberating* 170).

The distinction between *kleros* and *laos* reflected a secular societal arrangement of the Greco-Roman world. The administrative *kleros* (root of the word "clerk") were the magistrates. The *laos* were the people. Eventually, those with administrative responsibility in the Church became known as the *kleros*, a term that was borrowed from

the culture rather than derived from the New Testament (Kraemer 51). *Laos* meant people and could refer to any group or crowd of people. Secular Greek usage of the word included the population of a city-state. In biblical Greek, *laos* referred to the people of God, whether addressing Israel in the Old Testament or the Church in the New Testament (Stott 34).

The New Testament includes many images that describe the relationship between God and the followers of Jesus: the household of faith, the community of believers, God's vineyard, field, and building. However, the image of *laos*, the people of God, "is either stated or implied more frequently than any other in the New Testament" (Grimes 29) where it is used 140 times. Snyder summarizes five characteristics of the people of God: (1) a chosen people, (2) a pilgrim people, (3) a covenant people, (4) a witness people for reconciliation, and (5) a holy people (*Problem* 106). This designation always includes all the people of God without distinction between those "with ministry" and those "without a ministry." "'Laity,' in its proper New Testament sense of *laos*—the people of God—is a term of great honour denoting the enormous privilege and mission of the whole people of God (1 Pet. 2:9, Ex. 19:6)" (Stevens 5). In contrast with the perception in many churches today of the distinction between clergy and laity, Stevens writes, "When you enter the church today there are two 'peoples'—laity, who receive ministry, and 'clergy' who give it. But when we enter the New Testament we find only one people, the true laos of God, with leaders among the people" (26). In the New Testament, all God's people minister while some from among the people lead those who minister. Snyder confirms this perspective:

> The New Testament simply does not speak in terms of two classes of Christians—"minister" and "laymen"—as we do today. According to the Bible, the people (*laos*, "laity") of God comprise all Christians, and all

> Christians through the exercise of spiritual gifts have some "work of ministry.. . ." If we wish to be biblical, we will have to say that all Christians are laymen (God's people) and all are ministers. (*Community* 94-95)

Stevens borrows a model from Gordon Fee that clarifies the view that the leaders were part of the people of God rather than separate from them (see Figure 2.1).

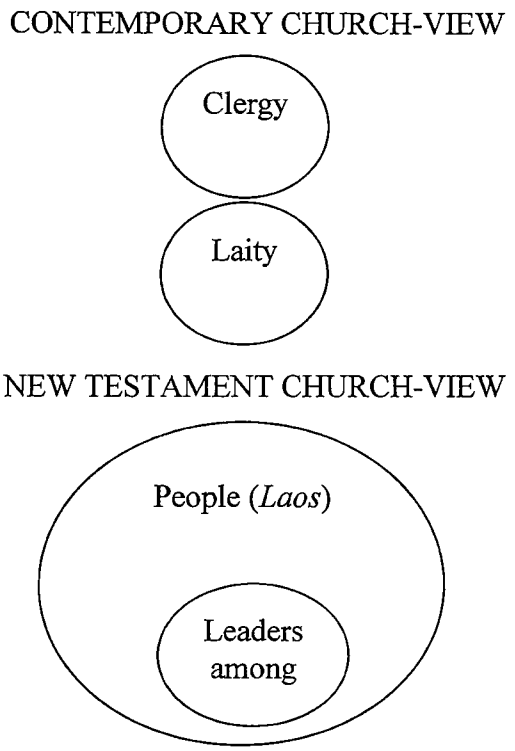


Figure 2.1. Model Comparison

Source: Stevens 27.

Snyder does not diminish the role of leadership in the early church. Some of the *laos* have special responsibilities or functions of leadership; however, this does not preclude the ministry of those who are being led. Rather it serves to strengthen and enable such ministry. "In the New Testament there are functional distinctions between

various kinds of ministries but no hierarchical division between clergy and laity" (*Community* 95).

Michael Slaughter also indicates that the pastor has a ministry among the various ministries of all the people of God. "All of us are ministers.. . . A pastor has a function in the same sense that a person with the gift of teaching, or someone with the gift of administration has an important function" (83).

The term *kleros*, "originally means a 'lot,' 'share,' or 'portion assigned to someone,' and was used in the Old Testament for the inheritance in the promised land" (Stevens 31). *Kleros*, from which clergy is derived also means "lot" in the New Testament. The Roman soldiers cast lots for Jesus' clothing (Matt. 27:35). The apostles cast lots to determine who would replace Judas Iscariot (Acts 1:17). Peter condemned Simon as having no lot or place in the matter of salvation and the Holy Spirit because of his motives (Acts 8:21). Paul mentions his role in helping the Gentiles find their lot or place in God's kingdom (Acts 26:18). Paul's use of the word *kleros* in Colossians 1:12 is descriptive of God's blessing of the Colossian Christians giving them a "share in the inheritance of the saints." This is the designated lot, share, or portion of all the people of God, not just those designated as leaders. In 1 Peter 5:3, the elders are exhorted to the care of those in their charge (*kleros*). They are to be examples to the flock. "The whole Christian brotherhood, both Jews and Gentiles, had come to be identified as the 'flock' or 'clergy' of God (Robinson 20).

When kleros is used to refer to the New Testament community of Christ, it always refers to "the body of men and women who share in God's gift of redemption and glory, which is their 'inheritance'" (Kraemer 52). Two key passages utilize a form of the word *kleros*, which is translated as "heirs" and "chosen." "If you belong to Christ, then you are

Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:29). "In him we were also chosen" (Eph. 1:11). This usage of *kleros* indicates that all God's people are included in the New Testament use of the word.

Ephesians 4

One of the key New Testament passages dealing with the issue of equipping the people of God for ministry is Ephesians 4:11-13. The context of these three verses is Paul's affirmation of the diversity of gifts that exists within a unified body based on the oneness of the Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of all. The conjunction, "but," in verse 7 indicates diversity within this unity. God's people share a common unity in Christ, but each member of his body has been given unique or different gifts to use in ministry to contribute to the oneness of the body.

Some of these gifts have been associated with the clerical offices of the Church. Verse 11 says, "It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers." Unfortunately, these have come to mean a set-apart "professional Christian class" of people, commonly known as clergy, who carry out the work of ministry. However, Paul writes that though they have ministries of mission, proclamation, soul winning, pastoring, and teaching, these ministries serve as a means for preparing all the people of God for their ministries: "to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up" (4:12). "The significant factor is the understanding of the function of the leader. *His function is to help equip the members for the work of ministry* [original emphasis]. The good pastor or teacher is one who cultivates the ministerial possibilities of his fellow members" (Trueblood, *Your Other Vocation* 46). The leaders mentioned in verse 11 are not meant to do all the work of ministry but to enable the whole people of God to do so.

"The formula developed was that, while all are called to be ministers, some are particularly called to be pastors.. . . There is a frank recognition of a division of labor without any denial of the universality of responsibility" (45).

In verse 12, the word "equip" ("prepare" in the NIV) is the Greek *katartismon.* "The word equip in the Greek is a very picturesque one.. . . meaning, 'to mend'" (Cordeiro 54). This is the same word used of the fishermen who were "mending their nets" when Jesus called them from a life of fishing to become fishers of men (Mark 1:19). "They were equipping their nets by mending them. They were getting them ready for action, fixing them up, preparing them" (Stedman 88). Another similar translation is "fitting them out" (88). The ministry of those listed in Ephesians 4:11 is that of outfitting the people of God for their ministry. "The Greek authority, J. H. Thayer, says it means 'to make one what he ought to be'" (qtd. in Stedman 89). The primary function of those in leadership in the Church is to help the people of God become what they are meant to be by preparing them for ministry. "God mends us through the office gifts so that we will be equipped to do the work of ministry" (Cordeiro 55). Mallory and Smith define equipping ministry as "essentially building an internal culture that values gift-based service, then creating ways to help people move from where they are now to where they should be" (15).

Leadership gifts are to be utilized for their intended purpose of equipping the people of God. The result, Paul writes, will be "that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (4:12b, 13). The result is a maturation of the whole body of Christ:

> No Christian can grow into the fullness of Christ except as he or she is

> part of a growing, maturing body. It is the whole believing community, not the individual believer, who reaches Christ's fullness, and the individual believer reaches that fullness only in the environment of a maturing community of believers. (Snyder, *Liberating* 173)

Ephesians 4 places the responsibility for ministry on the shoulders of all the people of God. The traditional "offices" of the church have as their main focus the equipping of the people of God. They are the outfitters who enable effective ministry as the whole body functions according to the gifts of the Spirit. When the body functions in this way, the whole becomes more mature and Christlike.

Historical Perspective

The Church's understanding of ministry has taken some interesting turns throughout its history. Significant developments in understanding ministry over the last two thousand years are highlighted.

Early Church

The New Testament church was a loosely organized structure that spread throughout much of the Roman Empire by the middle of the first century AD. The apostolic Church was a Spirit-filled and inspired movement characterized by charisms, or grace gifts, that were employed by all the people of God for the work of ministry. Some among the *laos* had gifts of leadership such as pastors and teachers, evangelists, apostles, and prophets. Even these were not typically "learned" men and women. Leadership arose from among the local body of believers:

> The New Testament church did not have seminaries for the privileged few to attend in order to become professionals, and then return to minister to spectators;. . . [Instead,] the church functioned as a seminary, equipping its own people for the purpose of frontline mission. (Slaughter 82)

"Early Christianity was a *lay movement. No one* [original emphasis] was 'ordained' in the sense that any Christian tradition means it today" (Hunter, *Church for the Unchurched*

120).

The Church did not become more formally structured and organized in a manner that began to reflect the civic organization of the culture around it until the end of the first century. At that time the word *laos* began to be used in a manner different from its New Testament context. Kraemer writes that the main reason for this "is the emergence of an organized, duly ordained clergy as a closed 'status' over against the 'laos', the people, i.e. ordinary congregation" (50). The biblical sense of the word *laos* shifted to an ecclesiastical sense, which was a "deviation from the biblical concept of the *whole* [original emphasis] Church as 'laos' and as 'a royal priesthood'" (51). The first use of the term "lay" in the non-ministerial sense is attributed to Clement of Rome ca. AD 96 (Yoder 18). However, laity was not used in Scripture in reference to "second-class, untrained and unequipped Christians" (Stevens 5).

During the second century, the Church continued to concretize the distinctive ministerial role of its leadership as opposed to the laity. "The vocabulary and the functions of priesthood (hiereus or sacerdos) and of rule (hierarchos) replaced those of servanthood, and Christianity had lost its cutting edge. This change seems largely to have taken place by the middle of the second century" (Yoder 17-18). In another hundred years, the term priest began to be applied to the Church leadership. Priests increasingly developed a more prominent sacerdotal role.

> The term *priest* [original emphasis] was not applied to Christian clergy until around the year 200. But thereafter a theology and practice were forged that created a priesthood of sacramental, holy orders in which the power of Christ's presence resided. Amid this transposition in leadership, then, rank and role increasingly displaced the New Testament experience of gift and charisma. (Guder 190-91)

The early Church's concept of every person having a ministry was gradually replaced by

a "professional" class of Christians who carried out most of the ministry. Stedman sums up this view: "The scriptural concept that every believer is a priest before God was gradually lost and a special body of super-Christians emerged who were looked to for practically everything and so came to be termed 'the ministry'" (85).

Constantine

The most significant element in finalizing the distinction between the clergy and laity as separate, distinct classes or levels of Christianity came when the Roman emperor, Constantine, embraced Christianity as the religion of the empire in AD 313. Suddenly, hundreds of thousands of people were "Christian" by name though not likely in belief or practice. If asked about one's religious convictions, a person might say, "I'm a Christian like everybody else in the Roman Empire." "The notion that a regrettable structural shift changed the nature of the church has often been focused on membership in the church having become easy or even compulsory (progressively beginning no later than the fourth century) (Yoder 19). Many continued their pagan practices but in the name of Christianity rather than their former religion.

The need developed for a clear and distinct role of religious professionals to guide the masses in appropriate, "state-mandated" worship of the Christian God:

> Constantine's sanction of Christianity in the first half of the fourth century accelerated these changes as the church forged a radically new relationship with the state. Many viewed the state's embrace of the church as the hand of God working in the church and empire to bring God's reign on earth.. . . Priest and cleric now served as spiritual guides to a huge empire. (Guder 191)

An increasing dividing line developed between the clergy and the laity. Ogden maintains that an increasing separation developed between the priesthood and people. "Ordination was interpreted as a kind of second baptism that lifted the clergy into a

superior stage of Christian achievement" (49). The priests became the practitioners of the faith while the laity became recipients of the clergy's ministry. Gift-based ministry by the whole body of Christ became nonexistent. "No longer based on gift and function, ordination was state sanctioned and an institutionalized office gained through rank and study. Clerical embodiment of the means of grace and office defined the church" (Guder 191). "This view effectively eclipses the gifts for leadership in the non-ordained contingent of God's sent people, those known in Christendom as the laity" (195).

Beginning with Constantine and stretching all the way into the mid-twentieth century, the era has become known as "Christendom." During this period, the Church played the prominent role in the social, cultural, and political landscape with varying degrees of success and failure in fulfilling its spiritual mission. In fact, the Church often became enamored with and guided by the corruption of worldly power. Constantine's symbol became the cross in the shape of a sword. The mission of the Church became one of conquest by military might in order to convert the pagans. Increasingly, the clergy became the visible representation of the Church while the laity maintained a more subservient uninvolved role. "In the Church of Christendom, the clergy assumed to play the primary role in mission and ministry" (Mead, *Once and Future* 53). "The governing principle became 'No clergy, no church.' From a community of God's people, the church became a 'place where' one received grace through a state-sanctioned priesthood" (Guder 191-92).

The Reformation

The Reformation sought to correct many inappropriate practices of the Roman Catholic Church that impacted the place of the laity and the role of the clergy. Reformers emphasized that the true Church was distinguishable by the Word of God rightly

proclaimed and the sacraments rightly administered. "The proclamation of the gospel was inspired by the watchwords of the Reformation, *sola scriptura* (by Scripture alone), *sola gratia* (by grace alone), *sola fide* (by faith alone), and the priesthood of all believers" (Ogden 51). Kraemer also writes about the progress made regarding the ministry of the laity during the Reformation:

> The Reformation had a positive affect [sic] on the separation and distinction between the "sacred" clergy and the "secular" laity. In principle the distinction of "clergy" and "laity" fell away. In his [Luther's] manifesto *To the Christian Nobility* he proclaimed: "All Christians are truly priests and there is no distinction amongst them except as to office.. . . Everybody who is baptized, may maintain that he has been consecrated as a priest, bishop or pope." (61)

However, the Reformation's new concept of the true Church and the role of the laity as part of the "priesthood of all believers" never became complete (cf. Kraemer; Ogden; Guder; Yoder; Snyder). "Contemporary writers on lay ministry usually assume the Reformation . . . never delivered on its promise of the Priesthood of All Believers; somehow, that doctrine never became operative" (Hunter, *Church for the Unchurched* 121). Guder synthesizes the writings of several authors:

> The church as static server of religious grace and power within a Christian society was neither challenged nor transformed by the Lutheran, Reformed, and Anglican reformers.. . . Teaching and preaching, oversight of right doctrine, and proper administration of the sacraments became the normative forms of Protestant leadership. The clerical paradigm remained embedded in the practices of these churches. Leadership continued as a separate clergy class, and gradually the qualifications for leadership came to be closely identified with schooling and academic qualifications. Even priestly vestments were exchanged by some Reformation traditions for the gown of the pedagogue. (193)

Great strides were made in the Reformation that opened the way for a more biblical understanding of the role of the laity using their gifts as part of the priesthood of all believers. However, many believe the Reformation did not go far enough in giving the

ministry of the Church back to the *laos*, all the people of God. This can be seen in the titles of several recent books on the subject: *The New Reformation* by Ogden, *The Second Reformation* by William Beckham, and *Completing the Reformation: The Doctrine of the Priesthood of all Believers* by William Robinson. These, and other writers, contend that the Church must embody this doctrine in its fullness in order to fulfill the biblical ideal of what the Church should be.

John Wesley and the Methodist Movement

John Wesley (1703-1791), ordained Anglican minister, experienced a radical transformation in 1738 that was the pivotal moment upon which the Methodist movement was built. Wesley's "heart-warming" experience in which he found the assurance of his personal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ became the launch pad for the Wesleyan revival. Wesley's development of a system for soul-winning and discipleship is unparalleled in its recognition and utilization of the laity for ministry. "British Methodism would not have existed without its extensive utilization of the laity" (Garlow 63).

Wesley took the gospel message to the masses. People responded to his earnest appeal in vast numbers. Wesley immediately recognized the importance of following up on a decision to receive salvation through faith in Christ with discipleship for living a new life in the way of Christ. The call to a holy life required guidance, nurture, support, and encouragement from others. Realizing the task was impossible to accomplish alone, Wesley innovated by organizing converts into "class meetings" for mutual accountability, nurture, and Christian growth under the direction of trained lay leaders with demonstrated spiritual growth. "Wesley soon discovered that some of his helpers had gifts for exhortation and preaching, and he put them to work" (Snyder, *Radical Wesley* 34). "Not

only did Wesley reach the masses; he made leaders of thousands of them" (53).

Unlike early reformers that had proclaimed the "priesthood of all believers" but failed to realize the full implications of this in reality, Wesley succeeded in involving significant numbers of laypeople in ministry. Though Wesley did not intentionally build on a theological foundation, he put the concept of the priesthood of all believers into practice. "Methodism was largely a lay movement, involving thousands of unordained folks in a wide range of leadership and ministry functions" (Snyder, *Radical Wesley* 119).

Wesley's approach went against the accepted cultural norms of eighteenth-century England. At that time, "the function of ministry within a congregation was vested in one professional clergyman. He was paid and trained to be the 'minister' and there were ecclesiastical rules to keep untrained laymen from usurping his role" (Henderson 137-38). Writing of the European Church hierarchy, Henderson indicates, "[T]he pastor played a role of complete pre-eminence, to the virtual exclusion of laypeople from all ministerial functions.. . . [T]his was also generally true of the Anglican clergy. They were a professional elite" (67). Wesley's use of unordained laypersons, both men and women, became one of the focal points for his critics. "Wesley was severely criticized for many things, but none more than his confidence in the role of laity in carrying the gospel" (Garlow 21). Not only did he receive criticism from the clerics of Anglicanism but also from the general populace. "The use of unordained and untrained laymen as band leaders was a shocking innovation to Anglican culture, and soon provoked waves of criticism from both the established clergy and the general public" (Henderson 67). Although criticized for utilizing common laboring laypersons as workers, Wesley believed "that such folk were the stuff true saints and ministers were made of" (Snyder, *Radical Wesley* 64).

Wesley persevered in the face of severe opposition to his ministry innovations. He developed a system for training, accountability, and supervision of lay leaders that is unparalleled in church history (Garlow 67). Throughout his amazing half century of ministry, Wesley trained over 653 lay preachers (64). Appreciation for Wesley's innovative genius in utilizing the laity for ministry has only grown over time. He has been credited with sparing Great Britain the kind of bloody revolution experienced in nearby France. The trained lay leaders and discipled believers of the Methodist movement became "salt" and "light" within their culture to help transform society:

> Rather than performing the "ministry" themselves, the leaders' main task was the training or equipping of the leaders at lower levels.. . . This concept of leadership alone was revolutionary enough to set Methodism apart from other sects which practiced a one-person ministry.. . . It enables thousands of common Christians to have a direct role in the shaping of their own church, and ultimately of the direction of the nation. (Henderson 138)

John Wesley took advantage of the gifts of those serving under him for every facet of congregational and small group life. Caring for the needs of the people aligned with the Methodist movement became the direct responsibility of the class leaders.

Wesley clearly saw the connection between ministry and discipleship. As laypeople got involved in ministry, their spiritual growth became more dynamic. "The service involved in mission became the context, not only the result, of serious discipleship" (Henderson 46). Wesley's connection of service to spiritual growth encourages the Church today to take seriously the need to equip people for ministry. "*The Wesleyan experience shows that the biblical emphasis on the priesthood of all believers and the gifts of the Spirit is entirely practical and workable* [original emphasis]" (Snyder, *Radical Wesley* 163). Wesley is rightly credited for the success of the Methodist movement. He pioneered lay ministry that transformed Great Britain and

became part of the spiritual heritage of the United States of America. Wesley did not accomplish this without willing and responsive laypeople. Without their support Methodism may have failed. The overwhelming involvement of laypeople in ministry within Methodism displays that people can discover and will accept significant ministry responsibility. "While it may be true that 'every great institution is but the lengthened shadow of a great man,' Methodism owed as much to its lay leaders as it did to its founder" (Henderson 145).

The Church Today

"We live in the generation when the unfinished business of the Reformation may at last be completed" (Ogden 11). However, many obstacles must be overcome in order for this to happen. A culture still exists within the Church that defends the idea of the "professional" clergy with the laity as recipients of ministry. "There are many contrasts between current Christianity and that of Christ's day, but the limitation of the ministry to a professional class of men is the most shocking of all these contrasts" (Trueblood, *Your Other Vocation* 43-44). This problem continues to hamper the Church from effectively accomplishing its mission. Correcting the problem begins by acknowledging it as many writers have done throughout the last half century:

> The reality is that the dependency model of ministry is firmly in place in the minds of most pastors of congregations. *Pastors do the ministry, while the people are grateful (or not so grateful) recipients of their professional care* [original emphasis]. Pastors are construed to be experts in things spiritual, while the people view themselves as objects receiving what they are not qualified to give one another. (Ogden 86)

The existing culture that allows for this dichotomy between the laity and the clergy is not easy to change. In fact, this concept often exists at a subconscious level. Christians, both among laity and clergy, are so immersed in centuries of tradition and

practice that overcoming the ingrained mind-set of the *modus operandi* is difficult. Clergy-dominated ministry has been part of the Church's environment for hundreds of years. "For centuries, the pastor was the educated, paid professional who ministered to God's people. He was responsible for the ministry, while the congregation helped him do his ministry and financially supported it" (Bugbee 25). Snyder writes, in *Liberating the Church*, that perhaps the implications of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers have not been carried to their conclusion because they "radically call into question the clergy-laity split by asserting that all believers are priests and therefore ministers" (169). The Church's cultural understanding of what ministry is about and who should do it must be dramatically reengineered. Changing culture lays the foundation for changing behavior. "Culture is a powerful influence on members' perceptions, thinking, and feeling, and these predispositions, along with situational factors, influence members' behavior" (Schein 377).

Some writers claim that the burden of responsibility for the status quo of clergy-dominated ministry remains squarely on the shoulders of the clergy. "In America the church is owned by its clergy" (Mead, *Five Challenges* 1). This idea of clericalism has dominated the Church for centuries. For the most part, the clergy make the major decisions, oversee the primary ministries of the Church, especially worship and proclamation of the Word, and are responsible for the administration of the sacraments. Many pastors wrestle with the notion of sharing ministry with the laity because they feel they are solely responsible for doing the ministry. Some pastors believe that the laity are not as qualified or proficient in ministry as they are. "The possibilities of most churches are frustrated more by the clergy's limited view of the faith, vision, and giftedness of the laity than by any other single factor" (Hunter, *Church for the Unchurched* 145).

On the other hand, some writers express the view that the laypeople have an insufficient understanding and practice of ministry. "[T]he ordinary laymen . . . expect religious functions to be performed by persons of a professional class. If we are to change the situation we must change the attitudes of the layman" (Trueblood, *Your Other Vocation* 46-47). Often, laity treat the clergy as if they are the spiritual elite of the church while viewing themselves as less gifted and less able to pray, minister, and hear from God. They act as if the pastors are the only ones equipped for doing ministry. "We've forgotten who God created us to be. Instead of fulfilling our own calling, tradition has taught us to hire others to do that for us" (Cordeiro 38).

Meanwhile the laity affirm their pastors' gifts and ministry, which encourages the pastors' continued reluctance to give the ministry away to the laity. Being affirmed and appreciated feels good. Pastors do the ministry because they are paid to do it and the laity applaud it. Cordeiro sums up the problem: "Over the decades, we've instituted the professional 'clergy' and simultaneously, we developed a new breed of churchgoers called 'consumer Christians'" (38). In contrast, George Barna indicates that effective churches today attempt to reshape this view of the laity and ministry: "In all the growing churches studied, efforts were made to remind people that their responsibility was to *be* the church, not just to *attend* [original emphasis] one" (72).

A third perspective holds that structures have kept the Church from realizing the full potential of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. "Today the Holy Spirit is often hindered in his ministry of distributing and igniting gifts among the members by traditional church structures" (Snyder, *Liberating* 175). In reality, the Church has inherited centuries of practices that have profoundly impacted the way all the people of God perceive ministry. Affirming the ministry of all the people of God is easy but

making it a reality is a difficult challenge. Pastors are not sure how to make that happen. This problem is very evident in the literature on this topic as seen in the following: "Most church leaders have not known what to do—beyond theological reflection and public advocacy; it is one thing to want the priesthood of all believers to be a reality, but another thing to see it realized" (Hunter, *Church for the Unchurched* 123). Similarly, "[e]ven where the priesthood of all believers stands as a theological conviction of an ecclesiastical community, it is rarely practiced in the church" (Guder 195). Mott writes, "The effort to convert the world through an official class has continued so long that the great majority of the laity have never had or have lost the sense of their own Christ-appointed mission" (43). Bruce Bugbee, an expert in helping laity discover their spiritual gifts shares similar sentiments:

> Many people are confused about what it means to be a minister because they have defined *minister* [original emphasis] by the traditional models they have seen. They may not feel they have permission to serve in ways that do not fit the picture of ministry that they've always held in their minds. (25)

A priority for pastors and laypeople alike in the contemporary Church is to develop a new culture within the Church that understands the priesthood of all believers and that the chief role of spiritual leaders is to equip the saints for the work of ministry. This new culture is a biblically defined vision of the Church's existence as it should be and will need to be reaffirmed, exemplified, and elevated in importance. An implication of this cultural transformation is a radical shift in how both clergy and laity view their respective roles. Pastors need to be willing to give ministry away to the laity and to see their own primary role as equipping laity.

> In the next generation we must produce clergy who can support the ministry of others and train them, rather than act out of a need to control their ministries.. . .They must be single-minded in commitment to building

> up and equipping the people of God for their new mission in the new age. (Mead, *Once and Future* 53-54)

Most modern writers support the clergy's primary role of equipping the laity (e.g., Eller; Trueblood; Cladis; Stevens). One author summarizes particularly well:

> A leader empowers others to serve. Jesus made extraordinary leaders out of ordinary people. He saw the potential within them, and he invested in their lives with the belief that God had something special in mind for them. As we embody the Spirit of Christ, we need to empower others to become all that God intends them to be. We need to give others opportunity to flourish under our guidance and love. We need to share the load with others who are gifted in areas where we are not as strong. We must express tangibly and intangibly that we affirm God's call on them and invest in them so that they utilize their gifts in meaningful ways. We dare not hold others back from the potential that is planted within them, planted there by God himself. (Macchia 130)

The laity needs to accept responsibility for their ministry and willingly receive guidance, instruction, and equipping for their ministry including identifying and utilizing their spiritual gifts. "The emerging credible Christian for the twenty-first century is a lay-volunteer who is prepared, equipped, and motivated to share faith and help others in practical ways" (Bandy 234). Equipping the laity will enable the Church to fulfill its mission in the world more effectively. A codependent relationship between clergy and laity is not acceptable. As laity begin to realize their gifts and accept their calling for ministry and as clergy bear the responsibility for equipping them, more workers will be ready, willing, and able to participate in reaping God's harvest in the world. "The church has a shortage of 'ministers' only when it fails to see all believers as ministers and thus fails to disciple believers into leaders" (Snyder, *Liberating* 247).

Both clergy and laity need to foster a new dependence on the work of the Holy Spirit. "The employees of the church are all of us. We are employed by God to serve the Kingdom of God and exhibit it to the world. We do this not out of our own power but by

leaning heavily upon the Spirit of God" (Cladis 134). Dependence upon the Holy Spirit must replace dependence upon the institution. Unfortunately, the institutional church has for too long emphasized structure and order and doing things according to "policy" or "discipline" effectively eliminating the freedom of the Spirit and the exercise of spiritual gifts by all the people of God. "The Church should consciously affirm its charismatic above its institutional nature. Otherwise we deny unintentionally that the Holy Spirit is the Church's truly vivifying power" (Kraemer 181).

Developing a new culture also has implications for the structures of the Church:

> *The church must provide structures which are sufficiently informal and intimate to permit the freedom of the Spirit* [original emphasis]. There must be a sense of the unexpected and the unprogrammed when believers come together, the excitement of the unpredictable, a freedom from set patterns and forms. (Snyder, *Problem* 97)

Many structures currently inhibit the work of the Spirit whether in the order of worship services, the selection process for leaders, or the role of boards and committees within churches. Rather than seeing their ministry as serving on a committee, laity need to consider how they can minister in the Church and the world throughout the week. "Permission-giving churches believe that the role of God's people is to minister to people, in the world, every day of the week" (Easum 51). This includes conveying decision making to those actually engaged in ministry in order to free them from the restraint of "due process" in which every decision must be approved by committee.

The clergy and laity must identify the laity as the front line for ministry. "In the emerging church, the laity are the primary ones to cross the missionary frontier and undertake the missionary task" (Mead, *Once and Future* 53). The mission field is no longer across the ocean in lands needing to be "conquered" for Christ as in the era of Christendom. The mission field is right outside the door of the Church, and the laity are

commissioned to take the gospel there. They "are the pioneers of relating faith to the business they work in, the home they manage, and the neighborhood they lie in" (Cladis 133). Unleashing ministry occurs when the laity are given the responsibility of being the church's ministers.

Leadership Network

Leadership Network is dedicated to facilitating the development of equipping churches through publishing resources, networking churches and leaders, collaborating with them, and providing training. Leadership Network has developed a model in *The Equipping Church Guidebook* for transforming existing structures or creating new ones to build equipping churches. "Equipping Ministry prepares people to understand their gifts and live out their calling in every area of their lives—church, community, family, marketplace, and mission. It is discipleship that includes both knowledge and action, resulting in group maturity" (Mallory and Smith 13).

The goal of the equipping church model is to fulfill the biblical mandate for leaders from Ephesians 4:11-15: "to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up." Components of the model include leadership that understands, casts the vision for, and models an equipping-centered ministry. The development of leaders and systems that move people from being unbelieving seekers to becoming fully devoted, equipped servants of Jesus Christ is also important. The equipping church model is a guide to help churches develop an equipping ministry system that arises from their own set of gifts, relationships, experience, and purpose in order to grow in maturity.

The Equipping Church Guidebook provides a well-rounded, biblical, and theologically sound model for developing an equipping church. It provides a dynamic

framework for each church to work through the major issues related to equipping ministry in a logical sequence that utilizes each church's uniqueness and creativity.

Research Methods

The research project is a quantitative study. In a quantitative study, the researcher "views reality as 'objective,' 'out there' independent of the researcher. Something can be measured objectively by using a questionnaire or an instrument" (Creswell 4). The researcher remains independent or disconnected from the subject being researched. In contrast, a qualitative researcher "admits the value-laden nature of the study and actively reports his or her values and biases" (Creswell 6). Objectivity was maintained by use of a researcher-designed instrument that was completed by the congregation.

The research is a quasi-experimental time-series design. "Quite commonly, time series designs are used with one or more intact groups, and with this condition they become quasi-experimental designs" (Wiersma 134). "The most basic form of quasi-experiment might be termed a *single group panel* [original emphasis] study. Here only one group is studied, often an entire church" (Carroll, Dudley, and McKinney 164). The treatment, *The Equipping Church Guidebook* equipping model was administered to the entire congregation. The goal was to measure the effectiveness of the treatment on the entire population. "One type of quasi-experiment is designed to test the efficacy, or effectiveness, of a treatment" (True 271). The experimental treatment was continued during the entire eighteen months of the project.

The design involved repeated measurement. Administering three Equipping Ministry Surveys (see Appendix C) provided a basis for "comparison to determine whether or not there is an experimental effect" (Wiersma 101). Prior to the treatment, a pretest (Observation 1) was administered to the population. One mid-test (Observation 2)

was administered near the end of the ninth month to evaluate progress at the mid-point of the project. The mid-test suggested areas of success and areas that needed further development in terms of the treatment. A posttest was administered at the end of the project to determine the overall effectiveness of the treatment (Observation 3).

Wiersma refers to this type of research project as "Action Research" (150). Action research is defined as "research conducted at the local level, typically by a practitioner, focused on solving a specific problem" (150). The research was conducted at the local level at Valley Chapel Free Methodist Church. As the pastor, I was the practitioner and researcher. The specific problem addressed was how to equip the laity for ministry.

"Evaluation Research" is another term that categorizes the type of study conducted. "When the goal is to evaluate a program, we often call this *evaluation research* [original emphasis]" (Carroll, Dudley, and McKinney 163). The intervention of *The Equipping Church Guidebook* equipping model is the independent variable. "In such research . . . one is trying to detect whether or not the presence of the program actually made a measurable difference on the individuals or groups being studied" (163-64). The model's effect on the congregation was evaluated to see if the model made a measurable difference in the congregation's understanding and experience of equipping.

Controlling variance was achieved by including the entire population in the study and through demographic questions asked on the survey. Using the entire population of regularly attending adults enabled measurement of the impact of the experimental treatment across a broad spectrum of people. By asking demographic questions pertaining to people's level of involvement, number of years attending the church, age, and internal relationships, determining whether these variables played a role in people's

understanding and experience of equipping was possible. The goal was to have a "*lack of artificiality* [original emphasis]" (Wiersma 100) so that the results of the experiment could be generalized to other church settings. "The more extensively the results can be generalized the more useful the research, given that there is adequate internal validity" (Wiersma 102).

Conclusion

When the Church begins to practice the priesthood of all believers as biblically understood and when the Church relies on the person and work of the Holy Spirit to empower and guide all the people of God, true revival is not far over the horizon. "If in the average church we should suddenly take seriously the notion that every lay member, man or woman, is really a minister of Christ, we could have something like a revolution in a very short time" (Trueblood, *Your Other Vocation* 29). Throughout church history, great times of renewal and revival have resulted from or been accompanied by a return of the ministry to the laity. "Christianity has been a lay movement from the beginning, and every renewal or revival in Church history has been at least partly a reassertion of the rights and duties of the laypeople over against the powers usurped by the hierarchy" (Stott 10). The laity must be equipped and empowered for ministry in order for the Church to be a theologically sound, fully functioning, biblical community.

The Valley Chapel congregation has the opportunity to experience the reality of being an equipped and sent people of God, filled with the Holy Spirit, serving Christ in the world so that God's people are empowered for holy living and full participation in the Great Commission. Then, the whole body matures into Christlikeness as described in Ephesians 4. God's presence becomes more real and vital in the community through his people. "If we want to see Jesus manifest on earth, it will be corporately through a

community of people who lay down their lives for each other and build up each other through the gifts variously distributed through the body" (Ogden 75). As God manifests his presence in and through his people, radical spiritual transformation takes place in people's lives and in the world.

CHAPTER 3

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Problem

Valley Chapel Free Methodist Church has experienced significant growth in the last twelve years, more than doubling in size. As a church of one hundred, the pastor could manage the ministry needs of the congregation with the support of several laypeople that eagerly serve in ministry; however, as the church has grown, a corresponding increase in the number of ministry needs that must be addressed has occurred. More important than "meeting the needs" is the biblical mandate to "make disciples" by teaching followers of Jesus to obey his commands and serve him in ministry. Spiritual growth of Christ's followers requires that they not only learn the truths of God's Word but that they also obey what they learn:

> Religious knowledge, conviction, and emotion require expression in service, or character becomes untrue and faith unreal. A multitude of laymen are today in serious danger. It is positively perilous for them to hear more sermons, attend more Bible classes and open forums, and read more religious and ethical works, unless accompanying it all there be afforded day by day an adequate outlet for their new-found truth and newly experienced emotion in definite witness-bearing, unselfish service to others, and resolute warfare against evil. (Mott 44)

Obedience includes responding to God's call to ministry by utilizing the spiritual gifts he has given for the purpose of service.

The pastor's purpose is "to prepare God's people for works of service" (Eph. 4:12). However, the rapid growth of the church combined with lack of clarity about how to prepare people for service and the confusion of the laity about the pastor's and their own ministry roles has led to a potentially unhealthy situation:

> *The primary task of pastoral leadership* (elders) *is equipping the body for ministry* [original emphasis].. . . Many churches affirm the ministry of all

> believers but do not in fact structure leadership in such a way that it actually reflects and makes operational the ministry of all believers. (Eller 105)

Unfortunately, the pastor and a few laypeople are often overburdened with a disproportionate number of ministry responsibilities while the majority of the congregation has little or no ministry. Pastors often become preoccupied with trying to keep things running rather than relying on gifted laypeople's involvement in ministry. Meanwhile, many laypeople find little satisfaction and joy either because they are serving too much or not at all. Either they serve out of obligation or guilt, or they fail to serve, missing out on a key outlet for God's gifts and their passion, and on the opportunity to grow spiritually. Overwhelmed leaders and uninvolved followers leads to miserably unfulfilled people without purpose in their lives. The end result is spiritual apathy, complacency, burnout, or failure. Not only are those already in God's kingdom hampered in their spiritual growth, but also the mission of the church to reach the world with the gospel is compromised when the laity are not equipped for ministry.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the changes in a congregation that result from participating in a program designed to equip the laity for the work of ministry. A model for equipping ministry from *The Equipping Church Guidebook* (Mallory and Smith) was implemented at Valley Chapel Free Methodist Church. The model's effectiveness for equipping the laity for ministry in the local church is evaluated.

The Project

The *Equipping Church Guidebook* (Mallory and Smith) model consists of six major headings (see Appendix A). The outcomes of this study reflect the three major headings of the foundational components of the model and the six subheadings of the

structural components of the model (see Appendix B).

The first component of the model, equipping culture, is foundational to all other facets. "Culture is the environment of expectations, values, and often-unwritten rules that surround everything your church does. Your church's culture powerfully determines people's actions and their acceptance or rejection of new things" (Mallory and Smith 61). The culture was influenced through preaching, teaching, leadership training, and modeling.

The second component of the model, ministry teams, "is an essential part of the culture and value of equipping ministry" (Mallory and Smith 69). Senior leadership roles were clarified. "Clarity in working relationships and the assignment of responsibilities makes a huge difference in the smooth implementation of an equipping ministry system" (69). The leadership was restructured so that ministry leaders were given responsibility, authority, and empowerment to make decisions within their areas regarding finances, personnel, and programming without having to get approval from the whole leadership team. Ministry leaders were encouraged to develop their own teams to accomplish their part of the church's mission. They were trained to carry out their specific roles within the parameters of the church's overall mission, financial guidelines, and personnel resources. A separate administrative team was formed to manage the overall budget, facility, planning, policies, and procedures of the church. They serve as a resource team for the ministry leaders without a direct supervisory role.

A lay leader for equipping was selected based on his spiritual gifts and passion. An equipping core team worked with the equipping leader to help develop an equipping ministry system. "One of your important decisions that affects the future of equipping ministry in your church is the selection of a leader to facilitate (along with a team) the

building and ongoing implementation of an equipping ministry system" (Mallory and Smith 69). Near the end of the project, the church held its first ministry workshop for everyone involved in ministry. The event provided training in how the various areas of ministry fit into the overall mission of the church and connected people with their ministry leaders and to others within their ministry area. The importance of small groups was also emphasized. Small groups doubled in number from five to ten groups in fall 2002. The amount of people attending a group more than doubled, and new people found the groups to be an effective connection to others within the church.

The third area of the model is support systems. "Ongoing administrative and strategic support systems are essential for successful implementation of equipping ministry" (Mallory and Smith 67). The equipping core team developed ministry descriptions. Membership software programs tracked information on new attendees, people's gifts for ministry, and ministry needs. The trustees implemented facility changes to improve ministry capability to families with young children. They also oversaw parking improvements to aid in the ability to reach out to new people through adequate and accessible parking. Technology capability was enhanced so the church could communicate the equipping vision creatively, involve more people in ministry, and improve the quality of worship. Prayer remained a priority at Valley Chapel for building an equipping system. Budgets, policies, and procedures were adjusted to reflect equipping values, including allocation of funds for lay training.

The fourth component of the model, *Assimilation*, involves "helping new people understand the church and her equipping ministry values and helping them connect into the church community, as well as helping existing members extend their involvement beyond Sunday morning attendance and find meaningful ministry opportunities"

(Mallory and Smith 64). The outreach leader developed a hospitality center for welcoming guests, sharing information about the church, gathering information about the guests, when appropriate, and providing guests with a gift. Greeter teams and team leaders were trained to oversee the ministry of hospitality. A newcomer's reception was held three to four times annually.

The fifth component of the equipping model, biblical foundations, involves several aspects:

> helping people come to trust that God has gifted them for and called them to ministry, teaching the biblical imperatives and spiritual growth outcomes of being connected in the body of Christ in community and using their gifts in service inside and outside the walls of the church. (Mallory and Smith 67)

Outcome 5 helps believers understand their service as part of Christian discipleship. The pastors preached and taught on the biblical basis for service. Ministry leaders participated in a retreat that focused on the biblical basis for ministry. Newsletter articles focused on the biblical basis for the ministry of every believer. In the fall of 2002, the church participated in "The Purpose Driven Life" emphasis offered through Saddleback Church in Orange County, California. The event included sermons, weekly small group studies, and individual devotional readings from the book *The Purpose Driven Life* by Rick Warren. Warren identifies ministry as one of the five purposes for our lives. "God redeemed you so you could do his 'holy work.' You're not saved *by* [original emphasis], but you are saved *for* [original emphasis] service" (228).

The sixth component, discovery, is "an interview and assessment process to help people learn more about the unique gifts, talents, temperament, and life experiences God has given them, and then to allow them to share their needs for ministry and for support from the congregation" (Mallory and Smith 67). The primary means of achieving this

outcome was through training in *Network* (Bugbee, Cousins, Hybels, and Seidman), a course that helps people understand God's design for them in the church. The subtitle of the course is, "The Right People . . . In the Right Places . . . For the Right Reasons" (3). Pastor Bill Hybels comments on the course: "The Network materials grew out of our desire to help believers discover their spiritual gifts, and then determine where to use them in our church body" (Bugbee, Cousins, Hybels, and Seidman 9). By the end of the project, nearly one hundred adults and youth had taken *Network* training. The equipping core team continues to develop follow up systems necessary to place people in ministry. The lay leader of equipping ministry developed a flow chart that shows the process for moving people into ministry at Valley Chapel (see Appendix E).

The seventh component of the model, matching and placement, involves "identifying ministry opportunities where people's unique abilities are needed within the church or community" (Mallory and Smith 67). At Valley Chapel, as servants indicate interest in serving within particular areas, they receive orientation into that ministry. Within a few weeks of beginning ministry, they have the opportunity to provide feedback on their fit with the ministry. Some of the ways Valley Chapel helps people identify ministries that match their gifts, style, personality, and passion include ministry fairs, newcomer and membership classes, and announcements of ministry needs with opportunities to respond.

The eighth component of the equipping model is growth, defined as "the ongoing supportive processes of *training, affirmation, feedback, and evaluation* [original emphasis] for people involved in serving in ministry" (Mallory and Smith 67). Growth provides ongoing support, encouragement, guidance, and training for ministry. The church developed training at two levels. First, a broader event, the Ministry Workshop,

brought all laypeople together for general training that showed how their ministry fits into the purpose of the church. The second level of training is more specific according to ministry area.

The final component of the equipping model is recognition and reflection. This is "the recognition and celebration of service and the opportunity to reflect on the meaning of ministry" (Mallory and Smith 67). The goal of this aspect is to help sustain people in their ministry and realize personal spiritual growth through their involvement in ministry. Outcome nine is achieved both formally and informally. People are encouraged to say thanks to others "caught in the act of serving." People are recognized and appreciated publicly for their service by staff and ministry leaders. Recognition occurs through articles in bulletins and newsletters as well as in public settings such as worship services. Throughout the year, other events, such as "Sunday school teacher appreciation day" help to recognize and affirm those who serve.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study is divided into two components: *The Equipping Church Guidebook* model and the outcomes of its implementation in the life of the local church. These components are reflected in the research questions that guided the study. The first question identifies the congregation's understanding and experience of equipping ministry prior to the study. The second question focuses on the changes that have occurred in the participants' understanding and experience of equipping ministry as a result of the implementation of *The Equipping Church Guidebook* model. This question addresses whether the outcomes of *The Equipping Church Guidebook* model were achieved. The third question attempts to identify which components of *The Equipping Church Guidebook* model were most significant in shaping the congregation's

understanding and experience of equipping ministry. This question addresses the components of the model that were most successfully implemented. The fourth research question considers possible intervening variables that were not controlled in the research design.

Research Question #1

What understanding and experience of equipping ministry characterize the congregation prior to the implementation of *The Equipping Church Guidebook* equipping model?

The answer to this research question provides a baseline reading of the congregation's understanding and experience of equipping ministry prior to the introduction of the independent variable, *The Equipping Church Guidebook* equipping model. Without this measurement, determining how much, if any, change occurred in the congregation's understanding and experience of equipping ministry would not have been possible. The question enabled evaluation of whether the goal of developing an equipping church was achieved as a result of the equipping church model.

Research Question #2

What changes occur in the congregation's understanding and experience of equipping ministry subsequent to the implementation of *The Equipping Church Guidebook* equipping model?

This research project was built on the premise that implementing an equipping church model in the life of the church enables the pastor and laity to function more biblically in their God-given roles. Ministering in this way results in greater fulfillment and joy in ministry by all the people of God, spiritual growth on the part of the whole body, and greater effectiveness in mission. The mid-study and post-study surveys

measured how the equipping church model impacted the congregation's understanding and experience of equipping ministry.

Research Question #3

What elements of *The Equipping Church Guidebook* model contributed to the congregation's understanding and experience of equipping ministry?

The model for developing an equipping ministry results in nine key outcomes (see Appendix B). The survey evaluates the congregation's success in achieving these outcomes through their responses to forty-five statements on a Likert scale. Five statements address each outcome (see Appendix C). This research question evaluated which areas of the model were most helpful or most successfully implemented and which were not or which may need to be further developed.

Research Question #4

What other intervening variables might correlate with the observed changes in the congregation's understanding and experience of equipping ministry?

Potential intervening variables in this study included: gender, age, level of involvement in the life of the church, and the number of years an individual has attended Valley Chapel Free Methodist Church. These variables have been controlled by their placement on the pre-, mid-, and post-study surveys.

Population

The population for this study consisted of all the adult worshipers (18 years and older) who attend Valley Chapel worship services at least twice a month. Weekly worship attendance registration sheets were used to determine who fits the "twice per month" attendance criteria. The population for Survey I was 161. At the time of Survey II, the population was 182. By Survey III, the population had grown to 208. The goal of

surveying the entire population was to get as wide a variety of types of respondents as possible within the framework of active participants.

Instrumentation

This study is an experimental evaluation utilizing a pretest, mid-test, posttest design with no comparison group. The Os in Figure 1.1 on page 18 represent pre-, mid-, and posttesting of people's understanding and experience of equipping ministry in the church while the X represents the implementation of the equipping church model from *The Equipping Church Guidebook* (Mallory and Smith)

The researcher-designed instrument, *Equipping Ministry Survey* (see Appendix C), evaluated the effectiveness of *The Equipping Church Guidebook* model (see Appendix A). The survey design was organized around nine expected outcomes of the equipping church model (see Appendix B). Five statements were developed that address each of the nine outcomes for a total of forty-five statements on the survey as shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1. Question Distribution by Outcomes

Outcomes	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Questions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36
	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45

Respondents were asked to identify their level of agreement or disagreement with the statements on a Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) as

indicated on Table 3.2.

Table 3.2. Level of Agreement/Disagreement

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

The pre-study survey established a reading of the respondents' understanding and experience of equipping ministry at the outset of the study. The mid-study and post-study surveys were identical to the pre-study survey. The mid- and post-study surveys measured changes in the respondents' understanding and experience of equipping ministry at Valley Chapel Free Methodist Church.

Semi-structured interviews of the ministry leaders were conducted at the end of the study to contribute a perspective from qualitative research (see Appendix D). The interviews address the following issues: Did the program affect the leaders' understanding of equipping ministry? Was the process perceived as contributing to the health and vitality of the church? Did the leaders experience personal benefits from the project? The letter Y symbolizes these interviews (see Figure 1.1 p. 18).

Survey Pilot Test

The congregational survey was pilot tested with a group of laypeople from the Wilmore Free Methodist Church. Ten people of varying ages and involvement levels in lay ministry completed the survey. The time to complete the survey ranged between ten and twenty minutes. The average time to complete the survey was fifteen minutes. The respondents offered a few wording suggestions that clarified meaning. They also gave input on the presentation of the survey instructions and the layout of the survey. The

resulting revisions were minor and did not require a second pilot prior to administering the survey for this project.

Data Collection

The pre-, mid-, and post-intervention surveys were given to all adults of Valley Chapel Free Methodist Church who attend worship at least twice a month. The intervention took place over an eighteen-month period between September 2001 and March 2003. The pretest was given in September 2001. The mid-test was given in June 2002. The posttest was given in March 2003.

The surveys were distributed at the close of a worship service. The names of those who received a survey were recorded. Those who did not pick up a survey were sent a survey in the mail the following day, along with a letter of explanation (see Appendix F). Two follow up postcards were mailed to the adult population thanking them for their participation and encouraging them to complete and return the survey if they had not already done so (see Appendix F). Respondents completed the surveys on their own and returned them to the church via U. S. Postal Service or in person to collection points at the church. Respondents had two weeks to complete and return the surveys.

Confidentiality was assured by the use of respondent-created codes utilizing the first initial of their mother's maiden name and the last four digits of their social security number. At each administration of the survey, the respondents were instructed to re-create the same code. This method of coding allowed for tracking changes in the individual respondents over time.

For the interviews of the layleaders, each person was met with individually at a prearranged time and place to conduct the interviews. Interviews were tape recorded, transcribed, and then subjected to qualitative data analysis (Appendix D).

Variables

The independent variable of this research project is the equipping model from *The Equipping Church Guidebook* (see Appendix A). The model was implemented sequentially beginning in fall 2001. Initially, an understanding of equipping ministry was developed among the leadership team at a leadership retreat. The congregation was simultaneously introduced to the concepts of equipping ministry through a sermon series on lay ministry and the roles of the clergy and the laity. Throughout the winter of 2001-2002, processes were initiated for building teams and integrating roles. In spring and summer 2002 support systems were developed for the latter stages of the model's implementation. By March 2003, the final phases of the equipping church model were implemented for preparing, connecting, and equipping people in ministry.

The dependent variables of this study are the cognitive and behavioral changes experienced by the congregation in relation to equipping ministry. The desire was that the congregation would be transformed by the implementation of the equipping model: the church's culture would be altered so that believers accept their call to ministry and utilize their spiritual gifts for service; systems would be developed to help people identify their spiritual gifts and place them in appropriate areas of ministry; and the pastors would be transformed in their understanding and practice of ministry to focus on preparing God's people for service rather than doing most of the ministry themselves. Ultimately, the goal was to see the whole body advance dramatically in the process of spiritual maturity and become more effective in achieving its mission of reaching lost people, bringing them to Christ, and helping them grow into functional, fully devoted followers of Jesus who also use their spiritual gifts to serve Christ as his ministers.

Intervening variables, which might influence or help explain outcomes, include

age, number of years attending Valley Chapel, and level of involvement in ministry. These variables are accounted for in the survey in order to control their effects.

Data Analysis

The content of the recorded interviews was processed to determine if any recurring themes emerged from the leaders' perspectives on the effectiveness of implementing the equipping model. Quantitative data was analyzed using t-tests and analysis of variance to determine effectiveness of achieving the equipping model outcomes. The responses of the participants from the pre-, mid-, and posttests were compared to accomplish this.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

A positive relationship exists between the Equipping Church Model and becoming an equipping church. The findings are presented beginning with a profile of the subjects. Data on the reliability of the instrument used in this study is presented. Finally, results of the research questions are given.

Profile of Subjects

The population of regularly attending adults was 161 at the outset (twice per month or more on average). One hundred twenty-three people, or 76.40 percent of the population, completed the pretest. The population at the time of the mid-test was 182. One hundred thirty-five people, or 74.18 percent of the population, took the mid-test. The population was 208 at the time of the posttest. One hundred sixty-three people, or 78.37 percent of the population, took the third survey.

Fifty-seven respondents took all three surveys. Sixty-four people took two of the surveys. One hundred twenty-two people took only one survey. Table 4.1 depicts basic demographic information for all three surveys (see also Appendix G).

Table 4.1. Demographics

Survey	N	*n*	%	Gender	
				F	M
I	161	123	76.40	83	40
II	182	135	74.18	87	48
III	208	163	78.37	101	62

Instrument Reliability

The researcher-designed survey was divided into two sections. Part I asked for

basic demographic information. Part II consisted of forty-five statements measured on a five-point Likert scale from 1, "strongly disagree," to 5, "strongly agree" (see Appendix C). The survey measures nine outcomes (see Appendix B) of the equipping church model from *The Equipping Church Guidebook* (see Appendix A). Five statements pertain to each outcome. The level at which each of the nine outcomes is achieved was determined by the respondents' mean score of the five statements for each outcome.

The first survey established a baseline reading of the respondents' perception of the equipping outcomes at Valley Chapel. The mid- and posttests provided a measurement to assess progress toward achieving the outcomes. Items worded negatively were scored in reverse to correspond with the positively worded items in the appropriate outcome.

The survey measured the extent to which the church reflected the equipping church model. Table 4.2 demonstrates internal consistency of the instrument. Alpha is acceptable at $a \geq .9$ for the statements and outcomes on all three surveys. The alpha for the forty-five statements shows that internal reliability consistency level was high. The nine outcomes of the equipping model also had high internal consistency reliability. The high alpha scores for the forty-five statements and the nine outcomes indicate that the survey reliably showed the level at which the church demonstrated the equipping church model. No other study has utilized the researcher-designed survey tool (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.2. Internal Consistency Reliability

Survey	*a*	
	Statements	Outcomes
I	.92	.90
II	.93	.93
III	.94	.93

Analysis of variance tests (ANOVA) were used to determine changes across all nine outcomes. Subject scores for all outcomes increased significantly between the pre-, and the mid- and posttests. Subject scores for outcomes 1, 2, 5, 6, and 7 increased significantly between the mid- and posttests (see Table 4.3).

Table 4.3. Equipping Outcomes

Outcomes	S I, n=123		S II, n=135		S III, n=163		*p*
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
1 Equipping culture	3.68	.52	4.00*	.47	4.14*†	.48	.00
2 Ministry teams	3.53	.50	3.73*	.46	3.87*†	.50	.00
3 Support systems	3.66	.49	3.88*	.45	3.97*	.45	.00
4 Assimilation	3.89	.51	4.16*	.46	4.19*	.44	.00
5 Biblical foundations	3.66	.52	3.97*	.53	4.13*†	.46	.00
6 Discovery	3.49	.52	3.75*	.47	3.87*†	.44	.00
7 Placement	3.11	.48	3.50*	.52	3.64*†	.47	.00
8 Training	3.05	.47	3.26*	.50	3.29*	.50	.00
9 Recognition	3.36	.49	3.52*	.44	3.58*	.45	.00

* Indicates means that are different from Survey I at the .05 level using Duncan's post hoc test.
† Indicates means that are different from Survey II at the .05 level using Duncan's post hoc test.

Valley Chapel's Level of Equipping at the Outset

The first research question of this study was, "What understanding and experience of equipping ministry characterize the congregation prior to the implementation of *The Equipping Church Guidebook* equipping model?" The September 2001 survey revealed that the strongest components of an equipping ministry that existed in the church were that of assimilation (O4=3.89) and culture (O1=3.67). The weakest components were the

areas of training (O8=3.05) and placement (O7=3.11).

Four foundational components of equipping ministry were measurably in place and operating at Valley Chapel at the outset of the study. The comparatively high score for assimilation (3.89) shows that respondents generally agreed that the church was receptive to visitors. People perceived that processes were in place to welcome visitors and help them become involved in the life of the church. The score for equipping culture (3.67) indicates that the respondents tended to agree that the church had an equipping culture, valuing lay ministry and believing it to be important to the health and growth of the body of Christ. Support systems and biblical foundations scored above 3.6 indicating some agreement that systems existed to support equipping ministry and that the biblical basis for equipping was taught and practiced.

Two aspects of equipping were not perceived to be strongly in place at Valley Chapel at the outset of the study. The comparatively low scores for training (3.05) and placement (3.11) reveal that the areas for being an equipping church most significantly lacking were the systems and processes needed to prepare people for, and place them in, ministry.

Three middle components vary in range between 3.36 (recognition) and 3.53 (ministry teams). Only ministry teams (O2) scored above 3.5 indicating minimal measurable agreement that this equipping component was present at the outset of the project. The other two areas, discovery (O6) and recognition (O9), scored under 3.5 revealing that these equipping indicators were barely above neutral, with only a minimal positive indication of their existence at the outset of the study.

At the time of Survey I, forty-eight people, or 39 percent of respondents, participated in one or less ministries of the church, predominantly worship services.

Sixty-two people (50 percent) participated in two to three ministries, and thirteen people (11 percent) participated in four or more ministries. Also notable is that forty people, or 33 percent of people taking the survey, did not actively serve in any ministry. Eighty-three people, or 67 percent of respondents, served in at least one ministry of the church.

Another characteristic of the population at the time of Survey I, is that fifty-two respondents (42 percent) had attended Valley Chapel less than five years indicating the church is reaching new people. A large share of the respondents began attending Valley Chapel since moving to the new facility in 1997. Seventy-one people, or 58 percent of respondents, attended Valley Chapel more than five years.

In September 2001 56.9 percent of the respondents had no children at home (seventy people) and 43.1 percent had children at home (fifty-three people). All three age groups were well represented. Forty people (33.1 percent) were between the ages of 18 to 40. Sixty people were in the middle age range of 41-60 (49.6 percent) and twenty-one people were over 60 (17.4 percent). Survey I was only offered to persons age 21 and over. After nine months of implementing the equipping model, a significant number of young adults showed interest in ministry and desired to take part in the survey. Therefore, the age group for Surveys II and III was increased to include adults age 18-20 who attend at least two worship services per month. While demographics would be slightly affected by this change for Survey II and Survey III compared to Survey I, the results pertaining to the outcomes would not be affected. Since every survey was provided to the entire regularly attending population at the time of each survey, some in each age category only took Survey II and Survey III.

Changes in Equipping

The second research question was, "What changes occur in the congregation's

understanding and experience of equipping subsequent to the implementation of *The Equipping Church Guidebook* model?" Significant change occurred in the congregation's understanding and experience of equipping based on the equipping model. Every outcome increased significantly between Survey I, and Surveys II and III. Five of nine outcomes increased between Surveys II and III (see Table 4.3).

Survey II saw an increase in the top two factors of Survey I to above a 4.0 indicating stronger agreement that the outcomes of assimilation and culture were being achieved (O4—*Assimilation*=4.15; O1—*Culture*=4.01). The largest increase in means occurred in factors O7—*Placement* (+ .39), O1—*Culture* (+ .32), and O5—*Biblical foundations* (+ .31). Standard deviations decreased in six of nine factors indicating less variation amongst respondents regarding their views of the outcomes. Standard deviations increased for factors O5, O7, and O8 indicating a wider range of responses by the population for those areas.

Survey III revealed a significant increase from Survey II in factors O1—*Equipping culture*, O2—*Ministry teams*, O5—*Biblical foundations*, O6—*Discovery*, and O7—*Placement*. Every factor increased significantly between Survey I and Survey III. Standard deviations decreased in eight of nine areas between Survey I and Survey III. This indicates a stronger level of agreement amongst respondents regarding the outcomes, strengthening the results of the study. The only factor in which the standard deviation increased between Survey I and Survey III was O8—*Training*. Standard deviation may have increased in this outcome because some ministry areas within the church had begun to offer training. For instance, those serving in hospitality ministry as greeters (part of assimilation) had received specific training by Survey III. Other areas of ministry had not implemented ministry training by the time of Survey III, although

training events have since been carried out or are in the planning stages (i.e., sound and stage training took place on 22 March 2003, after Survey III had been completed).

Another comparison worth noting is the changes experienced by the group that took all three surveys (see Table 4.4). Every outcome increased significantly on Surveys II and III from the baseline reading taken at Survey I; however, only Outcome 1 increased significantly between Survey II and Survey III. In contrast, scores for all respondents increased in five of the outcomes between Survey II and Survey III.

By the time of Survey II, the percentage of people participating in more than one ministry of the church increased from 61 percent at the outset to 68.1 percent at the time of Survey II and 71.8 percent by the time of the posttest. This indicates fewer people were only attending the worship service and more people were becoming involved in the life of the church. However, between Surveys I and III, the percentage of people serving in ministry dipped slightly from 67.4 percent to 66.9 percent of the people. At the time of the mid-test, a higher percentage, 68.9 percent, were serving in at least one ministry. Part of the reason for this dip between Surveys I and III may be the large increase in new attendees during that time period. At the outset of the study, only 20.3 percent of respondents had been attending one year or less. That percentage increased to 24.1 by the time of the posttest.

Another change in the demographics between Surveys I and III is in the number of respondents that have children at home. Parents with children at home increased from 43.1 percent to 49.1 percent of respondents between Surveys I and III.

Table 4.4. Comparison of Those Who Took All Three Surveys

Factor	Survey (N=57)	Mean	SD	*P*
O1—Equipping Culture	I	3.67	.52	.00
	II	4.11*	.39	
	III	4.31*†	.40	
O2—Ministry Teams	I	3.62	.51	.00
	II	3.81*	.48	
	III	3.96*	.49	
O3—Support Systems	I	3.73	.39	.00
	II	4.05*	.37	
	III	4.07*	.38	
O4—Assimilation	I	3.89	.45	.00
	II	4.21*	.44	
	III	4.26*	.35	
O5—Biblical foundations	I	3.80	.51	.00
	II	4.19*	.47	
	III	4.31*	.37	
O6—Discovery	I	3.45	.55	.00
	II	3.79*	.48	
	III	3.85*	.46	
O7—Placement	I	3.12	.52	.00
	II	3.59*	.44	
	III	3.66*	.41	
O8—Training	I	3.00	.53	.05
	II	3.22*	.50	
	III	3.22*	.59	
O9—Recognition	I	3.34	.55	.05
	II	3.51*	.44	
	III	3.56*	.47	

* Indicates means that are different from Survey I at the .05 level using Duncan's post hoc test.
† Indicates means that are different from Survey II at the .05 level using Duncan's post hoc test.

Representation of people from all three age groups changed significantly, although as noted earlier, the age range for Surveys II and III included those age 18-20. Survey I did not. By Survey III, 43.5 percent of respondents were between the ages of 18-40, a jump of over 10 percent. Those age 41-60 decreased from 49.6 percent to 45.3

percent of the population between Survey I and Survey III. Those age 61 and over decreased from 17.4 percent to 11.2 percent of the population.

Another important comparison between Surveys I and III is the number of significant relationships people have within the church. Those with only one significant relationship or less went down from 27.6 percent to 16.7 percent between Surveys I and III. Those with two to three relationships decreased from 20.7 percent to 17.3 percent. Those with more than three significant relationships in the life of the church increased from 49.6 percent at the time of Survey I to 65.5 percent by the time of Survey III. These changes indicate that people's connections with others increased forming a potentially stronger sense of community in the life of the church. This is a positive trend related to the increased emphasis on ministry teams with healthy relationships within the church (Outcome 2).

Table 4.5 compares demographics for age, years attending, participation, and service. A larger decrease in the mean and median age occurred between Survey II and Survey III than between I and II, even though Survey I did not include 18-20-year-olds.

Table 4.5. Demographic Comparisons

	Age			Years Attend			Participation			Service		
	S1	S2	S3	S1	S2	S3	S1	S2	S3	S1	S2	S3
N	123	135	163	123	135	163	123	135	163	123	135	163
Mn	48.26	46.33	43.99	8.22	7.68	7.06	1.99	2.07	2.21	1.36	1.54	1.55
Med	49	47	43	5	5	5	2	2	2	1	1	1
SD	14.13	15.51	14.96	7.42	7.06	6.74	1.08	1.07	.98	1.20	1.46	1.55
Min	23	18	18	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Max	80	83	84	38	40	40	5	5	5	5	6	6

The mean number of years attending Valley Chapel decreased from 8.22 to 7.06

years. The median remained five, indicating that over half the respondents began attending the church since relocating to its new facility in 1997. Participation increased from 1.99 to 2.21 ministries, and service increased from 1.36 to 1.55 ministries between Surveys I and III. Both areas indicate a positive effect of the equipping model on people's participation and involvement in ministry.

Newcomers' perceptions of equipping outcomes at the time of each survey were compared. Table 4.6 shows changes in how newcomers viewed equipping. The most significant change occurred between Surveys II and III.

Table 4.6. Comparison of Respondents New to the Church

Outcomes	S1, n=25		S2, n=25		S3, n=38		*P*
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
O1—Equipping. culture	3.40	.51	3.81*	.49	4.07*†	.47	.00
O2—Ministry teams	3.28	.38	3.51*	.29	3.76*†	.46	.00
O3—Support systems	3.39	.62	3.59	.46	3.94*†	.47	.00
O4—Assimilation	3.56	.64	4.02*	.45	4.18*	.46	.00
O5—Biblical foundations	3.48	.46	3.73*	.45	4.13*†	.42	.00
O6—Discovery	3.49	.58	3.64	.39	3.88*†	.38	.00
O7—Placement	2.97	.46	3.30*	.56	3.65*†	.49	.00
O8—Training	3.05	.35	3.18	.29	3.36*†	.34	.00
O9—Recognition	3.34	.47	3.55	.42	3.68*	.46	.02

* Indicates means that are different from Survey I at the .05 level using Duncan's post hoc test.
† Indicates means that are different from Survey II at the .05 level using Duncan's post hoc test.

When comparing the three groups of recent attendees (one year or less), several observations stand out. First, significant growth occurred in the perception of five of the outcomes between Surveys I and II (O1, O2, O4, O5, and O7). Significant growth occurred in their perception of all outcomes except O4 and O9 between Surveys II and

III. Every outcome increased significantly between Surveys I and III. As a group, the people who began attending the church near the end of the equipping project perceived the church to have a significantly higher level of equipping than the group who began attending the church in the months just prior to the outset of the project.

Contributing Factors

The third research question was, "What elements of *The Equipping Church Guidebook* model contributed to the congregation's understanding and experience of equipping ministry?" All the factors increased between Surveys I and II. Five factors increased between Surveys II and III. For those who took all three surveys, only factor one increased between Surveys II and III. Progress was greater during the first half of the implementation of the model than in the second half.

The implementation of the model is still in its early stages. The authors of the equipping model indicate, "Most churches experience a lag of anywhere from nine to eighteen months from the time they begin these foundational development activities until they see visible results" (Mallory and Smith 227). A fully implemented and operating equipping model may take from three to five years. The first half of the project from September 2001 to June 2002 focused on Outcomes 1-3, the foundational aspects of culture, teams, and support systems. The second half of the project focused increased attention on Outcomes 4-9 while maintaining earlier progress made in Outcomes 1-3. Outcome 4, which did not increase significantly between Surveys II and III, measured as the strongest outcome consistently on all three surveys. The middle Outcomes of 5-7 all increased significantly between Surveys II and III. Of the outcomes emphasized in the latter half of the project, only Outcomes 8 and 9 did not change significantly.

Outcome 8—*Training* states, "The church has a clear process of preparing people

for ministry." One of the reasons no significant change occurred in O8 is that the training components for ministry were not fully in place at the time of Survey III. The major training event, "Ministry Workshop," was postponed due to weather until after Survey III was completed. Also, two other major "ministry specific" training events took place after Survey III that were being prepared for several weeks. One of the reasons training was not available earlier is that new ministry leaders were elected in January 2003. The new leaders were just learning their new roles at the time of Survey III and had not had a chance to develop plans for training laypeople within their ministry areas.

Valley Chapel officially launched its equipping ministry structure on 2 March 2003. Many equipping components had been put in place but would not be fully realized until the end of the first year of being an equipping church. For instance, Outcome 9—*Recognition* says, "The church will provide intentional opportunities for recognition of its ministry volunteers and reflection on their ministry." While some intentional recognition has occurred, the full extent of this outcome will not be realized until the end of the ministry year.

Every facet of the model had significant impact on the changes seen as a result of this project. The statistical growth in every area indicates an overall positive shift in the laypeople's understanding and experience of equipping ministry.

Intervening Variables

The fourth research question was, "What other intervening variables might correlate with the observed changes in the congregation's understanding and experience of equipping ministry?" Within Survey I, t-tests for comparison of two variables and analysis of variance (ANOVA) for comparison of three or more variables reveal that several outcomes (factors) were significantly different within given categories. The

variables with significantly different factors are reported in Appendix H. The variable, "Number of years attending Valley Chapel," had the highest number of significantly different factors. For Outcomes 1-4, those attending over one year scored significantly higher ($p \leq .05$) than those attending one year or less. This indicates that the longer one attends the church, the greater people's awareness and understanding of equipping in these four areas. The fact that no significant difference was observed for outcomes 5-9 based on the number of years people have attended the church may indicate that these areas were underdeveloped.

Differences within Surveys II and III were based on some of the independent variables. Three areas are of particular interest in Survey II in which several factors were affected by the independent variables (see Appendix I). As in Survey I, the number of years respondents had been attending affected several factors. Consistently, those attending for a year or less scored significantly lower than either one or both of the categories of those attending two to four years or five years and over. In Survey II, more factors were affected than in Survey I by how many areas of service in which people were involved. Typically, respondents involved in more ministries scored higher on the factors. The more involved people are in ministry, the more they sense the equipping values of Valley Chapel.

Another area of significant differences was the number of relationships people had within the church. Question 11 in part I of the survey asked, "How many significant relationships do you have with people from this church? In other words, with how many people from this church do you associate regularly as friends outside of church functions?" The question tried to establish whether a correlation existed between significant relational connections in the life of the church and people's view of equipping

ministry. The results of Survey II indicate a likely correlation (see Appendix I). For six of the factors, those with more relational connections in the church had a higher score than those with fewer relational connections. This emphasizes the importance of connecting people in significant experiences of community.

Several independent variables on Survey III also affected multiple factors (see Appendix J). As in Surveys I and II, those who did not serve in any ministry scored significantly lower than those who served in three or more ministries for O1—*Equipping culture*, and O2—*Ministry teams*. Also, the more people participate in ministries of the church, the higher the scores for O1—*Equipping culture*, O2—*Ministry teams*, and O5—*Biblical foundations*. Also, the higher the number of relationships people have in the church, the higher the factor score for Outcomes 1-5, with one exception. Those who indicate they have four to five relationships scored significantly lower than those with two to three relationships for Outcomes 1 and 2. This may be explained by the higher standard deviation for the category of those with four to five relationships. Another possible reason is that this group may represent those who have been part of the church the longest. If so, they may resist the equipping changes as a threat to their security with present structures. One notable difference between Surveys I and II and Survey III is that Survey III had no significant differences based on the number of years people attended Valley Chapel.

Qualitative Input

One qualitative component of the research includes two questions on the surveys. Respondents were given the opportunity to answer, "What attracted you to this church?" in "Part I, Demographics." At the end of the survey, respondents had the opportunity to offer other general comments or feedback in a space for "other comments." The results of

the input are found in Appendix K.

The qualitative data shows five consistent reasons people were attracted to Valley Chapel. Highest on the list for all three measurements was "friendliness, acceptance, and care." Doctrine, biblical teaching, and preaching were also noted as significant reasons for coming to the church. The church's ministries were also reasons people were attracted to the church. Respondents appreciated the kinds of ministries offered and the service of people within the body to each other and to newcomers.

The information gleaned from the "general comments and feedback" was interesting. At the time of Survey I, the highest response was that people were not sure how to serve or get involved in ministry. Survey I had a higher percentage of negative responses overall regarding lay ministry and equipping. By the time of Survey II, the "other comments" regarding equipping concepts became much more positive and numerous. Both Surveys II and III showed an increase in frequency of comments about the improvements people were seeing in regard to spiritual gifts, lay ministry, and the processes available for getting involved. Each survey included critical comments that indicate some did not feel the church had made significant progress.

The other qualitative component of the research was interviews of six ministry leaders following the intervention. Five questions were asked of the interviewees to determine the ministry leaders' sense of progress in equipping seen at Valley Chapel over the course of the intervention (see Appendix D). Consistently, the interviews revealed that the leaders perceived that equipping had become important in the life of the church, that they were personally gratified with their ministries, and that they believed the church to be headed in the right direction.

From my field notes, I received affirmation from laypeople regarding equipping

throughout the project. A lady began attending the church near the beginning of the intervention. She lived close to a donut shop. One Saturday evening I asked her to pick up a dozen donuts for a team I was meeting with on Sunday. She left a note on my desk with the donuts. She wrote, "Pastor Todd—What's this? A new ministry? The donut gal? O.K.—I'm in! Thanks for asking me to help. Everyone wants to make a difference somewhere." Her enthusiasm for a very simple request conveyed that she thought that what she did was an important and helpful ministry, both to those she served and for her own sense of fulfillment.

Early in the intervention, laypeople were intentionally utilized in the worship services to publicly model lay ministry. This reduced the sense of an overly dominant clergy presence. Laypeople began serving communion, reading Scripture, introducing the offering, leading the call to worship, and sharing the children's sermons. The lay worship participants were very effective. Several have given feedback about how meaningful the laypeople's participation in the services has been to them.

The interviews with ministry leaders indicate that equipping made their roles much easier. Prior to the intentional development of equipping ministry, lay leaders would often express frustration that they were overburdened. The trustees handled all the property upkeep and maintenance issues on their own, youth workers lacked sufficient help, and when a worker was absent, the ministry leader had to fill in. By the conclusion of the project, ministry leaders indicated that they were blessed to find sufficient help and support for their ministries. Qualified and spiritually gifted laypeople began stepping forward and showing an interest in being part of the various ministries, including youth, hospitality, buildings and grounds, Christian education, and congregational care.

Another interesting development was the initiation of ministry by laypeople that

began to occur near the end of the project. A young mother began a "parent's network" group that connected parents with each other and with resources to help with parenting needs. Another group of people connected when they found that each of them had interest in landscaping. The group has begun meeting and will present a plan to the church planning team for a prayer garden. Such occurrences are identified as "spontaneous ministries" that develop from the hearts and passions of laypeople. The formation and development of these ministries do not depend on the clergy.

A lay leader shared that she asked someone to help with a ministry. The response she received was, "Thanks for asking. I can't believe you thought of me. I'd be glad to help." Another person was asked to help in the same ministry, and replied, "Thank you for asking, but I feel my gifts are in another area." Both responses indicate that equipping principles are becoming part of the people's mind-set regarding ministry.

Summary of Findings

The findings show that a positive relationship exists between the "Equipping Church Model" and becoming an equipping church. The changes are observable in the increase of all nine factors in this study between Survey I and Surveys II and III. The increase of five of the factors between Surveys II and III indicates further progress occurs over time. The following points summarize key findings that are explored in Chapter 5, "Summary and Conclusions":

1. Foundational equipping elements were present at the outset;
2. Structures did not fully reflect the equipping culture at the outset;
3. The first nine months of the equipping model helped build momentum;
4. Equipping became embedded in the church's culture; and,
5. The treatment of the equipping model was accurate and effective.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The roots of this research project trace back to my desire to fulfill my role to equip God's people for ministry. Consistent numerical growth in the size of the congregation over several years led to a sense of urgency about the church's ability to meet the increasing demands of ministry. The pastor should not and cannot do ministry alone. The biblical approach to ministry is that every believer is called and equipped to serve Christ. While affirming the biblical and theological reality of the priesthood of all believers, I encountered resistance to this concept from a variety of sources. Church traditions, lay expectations, and internal motivating factors, such as the personal gratification that comes from the affirmation of others for "doing ministry" for them, all work together to inhibit the practical application of the priesthood of all believers in the life of the church. The primary role of pastoral leadership to equip people for their ministry often gets neglected because the congregation's ministry needs seem to demand constant attention.

Leadership Network has connected with congregations that purposefully and intentionally function in an "equipping paradigm." Through their research, Leadership Network produced a guide to help congregations become "Equipping Churches." *The Equipping Church Guidebook* presents a model that can be adapted by churches to help them equip the laity for ministry in their unique settings (Mallory and Smith). Nine outcomes of the equipping model were identified. The equipping model's effectiveness to equip laypeople for ministry was evaluated by using a congregational survey. The instrument measured how well the model's outcomes were achieved at Valley Chapel Free Methodist Church.

Evaluation and Interpretation

The data shows that significant change occurred in all nine outcomes of the equipping model at Valley Chapel Free Methodist Church. The data reveals several key findings.

Foundational Equipping Elements Were Present at the Outset

The first outcome of the equipping model is *Equipping Culture*. When the culture is sufficiently shaped, building equipping structures and systems meet with greater acceptance and success. "Internal culture can and must be changed and proactively built up in order to provide a healthy underpinning for the task of equipping people for ministry" (Mallory and Smith 61). The fact that *Equipping Culture* was the second strongest outcome in place at the outset of the study is not surprising. The church has historically valued the ministry of its laity. During an earlier period of dynamic growth between 1978 and 1983, the church did not have a full-time pastor. Lay leaders took significant responsibility for leading various aspects of ministry. Some of those who came during that time continue to serve actively in ministry today. In the fall of 1995, the congregation organized a financial campaign under the leadership of a consultant that actively involved 75 to 80 percent of the congregation. Over four hundred thousand dollars were raised over a three-year period to relocate and build a new facility. The new church building was designed and overseen primarily by lay volunteers. Contractors completed the actual construction, but many laypeople volunteered countless hours to the building project.

One of the characteristics of Valley Chapel that attracted me to serve as pastor of the congregation was the people's willingness to serve. They want to be part of God's

work in significant ways. The congregation also wants to follow godly competent leaders who provide direction to the mission and ministries of the church and equip people for ministry. The congregation utilized Rick Warren's *Purpose Driven Church* model to develop its purpose prior to the research. The model utilizes a baseball diamond metaphor to highlight progress in the spiritual growth of believers (130). People make a commitment to Christ and become part of his family, the church (first base). Then they enter a process designed to help them grow in Christian understanding and maturity (second base). Next, they learn about God's gifts for service and get involved in ministry (third base). Finally, they realize their part in Christ's mission to the world (home plate). Administrative structures had regularly been evaluated and updated to align with the church's purpose. Equipping ministry was part of the church's culture prior to the study, contributing to the openness and acceptance of the equipping model.

Another "foundational element" somewhat present at the outset was Outcome 3—*Support systems*. This outcome states, "The church has defined functioning support systems for administration, strategy, and prayer." *Support systems* was the third highest rated outcome at the outset of the project, scoring 3.66. People generally sensed that key support system elements such as prayer, communication, opportunities for service, and leadership support were present at the outset of the study. These systems are critical to developing an equipping church.

Outcomes 4 and 5 were also evident at the beginning of the study. Outcome 4—*Assimilation* says, "The church has a clearly defined process for assimilation." *Assimilation* was the strongest of all nine outcomes at every measurement taken and scored 3.89 on Survey I. The qualitative data from the first survey (and subsequent surveys) indicates that the most significant reason people were attracted to Valley Chapel

was its friendliness (see Appendix K). The data reveals that the church was effective at helping newcomers feel welcome and assimilating them into the life of the church.

Assimilation is an equipping "structural component" rather than a "foundational element." Assimilation is an intentional process or procedure for accomplishing one of the aspects of equipping. Although other equipping elements flow out of success at this stage of the equipping model, they are not as dependent upon assimilation as they are the other foundational elements of culture, support systems, and ministry teams. However, assimilation's presence at the outset made a positive contribution to the success of the model. New attendees, the group in need of assimilation, had a growing understanding and experience of equipping. This is revealed in the significant increase in the scores of numerous outcomes between all three surveys for this group (see Table 4.6 p. 84).

Outcome 5—*Biblical foundations* states, "The church has a strong biblical foundation for understanding the basis for service and a process for helping people grow into Christian maturity." This component of the equipping model is a "structural element" that moves people along on the continuum of spiritual growth toward being equipped for ministry. However, *Biblical foundations* is also a foundational element because it is closely related to the development of an equipping culture. "Laying the biblical foundation is a vital and necessary component for creating a church culture receptive to the values of equipping ministry" (Mallory and Smith 64). *Biblical foundations* was the fourth highest rated outcome at the outset, scoring a 3.66, an indication that it was somewhat present in the life of the church.

Structures Did Not Fully Reflect the Equipping Culture at the Outset

One of the dangers of having an equipping culture that lacks practical application in terms of systems and structures is that people begin to lose interest in equipping:

> If you express the values of equipping ministry without building an equipping ministry system, people can easily begin to substitute the "words" of equipping for the actions, or else their enthusiasm may explode and then wane again as their expectations are not met. (Mallory and Smith 77)

At the outset of the study, Valley Chapel was in danger of failing to embody equipping culture in its structures, particularly *Ministry teams* (O2), *Discovery* (O6), *Placement* (O7), *Training* (O8), and *Recognition* (O9). Outcome 2—*Ministry teams* states, "Ministry teams consist of people with healthy relationships who clearly understand their role within the mission, vision, and values of the church." *Ministry teams*, part of the systemic outgrowth of an equipping culture, scored in the middle of the nine outcomes (3.53) at the outset of the study. Of the bottom five scores, this is the only area that scored above 3.5. Prior to the study, only a few groups of people identified themselves as a "team" with a specific ministry purpose in the life of the church. The ministry leaders functioned together as a team. However, the leaders' teams within their ministry areas, over which they should have served as "coaches," were largely non-existent. For example, prior to this project, children's workers rarely got together for planning, prayer, fellowship, or creative interaction.

Another structural outcome, *Discovery*, says, "The church has a clear process for helping people discover and understand how their spiritual gifts, personality, passion, and experience combine to determine the best possible places for ministry." The score of 3.49 at the outset indicated that people were generally neutral about the existence of a spiritual gifts discovery process. The church had often talked about spiritual gifts but rarely provided opportunities to help people discover them. Even more unfortunate, those who had been through a gifts discovery process were often left to figure out on their own where their gifts might best be utilized in ministry. The dilemma of not knowing where to

serve is reflected in the low score of 3.11 for Outcome 7—*Placement* (second lowest) at the outset. This outcome says, "The church has a clear process for placing people in ministry that fits their gifts, personality, passion, and experience." People did not agree that this outcome was in place though they were merely neutral, not in disagreement with the outcome overall.

Outcome 8—*Training* says, "The church has a clear process of preparing people for ministry." *Training* was the lowest scoring outcome at the outset of the project (3.03). This score reflects the fact that very little training was offered prior to this study. Ministry descriptions did not exist and people rarely met with their ministry leaders to discuss the nature of their role, unless the laypeople had a question or need. Though people had a high view of the church's equipping culture, the structures for training did not reflect the equipping culture at the outset of the study.

The final structural component not in place at the outset was Outcome 9—*Recognition.* This outcome says, "The church provides intentional opportunities for recognizing its ministry volunteers and helping them reflect on their ministry." This outcome reveals how much people are recognized and appreciated for their service, how much people are growing spiritually through their participation in ministry, how appropriately people are connected with ministry, how satisfied and fulfilled people are in their ministry, and how much people perceive that others care about what they do in the life of the church. At the beginning of the study, Outcome 9 scored third lowest at 3.36, revealing that this structural component barely existed in the life of the church. Qualitative responses revealed that a small number of people did not think people should be recognized for their ministry because they believed doing so could lead to pride.

The First Nine Months of the Equipping Model Helped Build Momentum

Every outcome increased significantly in the first nine months of the intervention between Survey I and Survey II. Two outcomes scored above 4.0 indicating agreement that they were being achieved (O1—*Equipping culture* and O4—*Assimilation*). Three outcomes moved significantly closer to "agreement" among respondents scoring above 3.75 (O3—*Support Systems*, O5—*Biblical foundations*, and O6—*Discovery*). Outcomes 2, 7, and 9 scored 3.5 or higher. Only O8—*Training* remained close to the "neutral" response; however, even that area saw a significant increase. The results indicate that the early stages of the equipping model led to dramatic progress toward becoming an equipping church.

The congregation had developed its purpose prior to the intervention. However, the leadership team clarified the church's purpose through the early stages of this project. Several messages on the church's purpose of making disciples included equipping as a critical component of discipleship. Articles on the purpose and equipping were regular features in the church newsletter. The biblical foundation was laid for equipping with the leadership team at a leadership retreat in fall 2001. These factors contributed to the growth of the respondents' view of the church's equipping culture.

The church added the position of equipping leader and an equipping core team in the first half of the model's implementation. These adjustments to the leadership structure significantly increased the focus on equipping in the life of the church. Early in the project, the church also increased pastoral staff from having a part-time to a full-time associate pastor. The new associate position included significant responsibility for overseeing and equipping laypeople for ministry. The number one aspect of the new staff member's job description was to equip laypeople to serve within their appropriate areas

of ministry. The new associate had the opportunity to consider the church's developing high value of equipping before accepting the position. He strongly agreed with the equipping model and accepted the position, in part, because of it.

Communication about the various ministries available in the life of the church improved dramatically early on and throughout the project. Several ministries utilized creative arts and video technology to communicate their purpose and needs. Public testimonies regarding ministry and the ministry fairs contributed to the achievement of this outcome. People became more aware of what ministries were available and how to get involved in them.

Prayer is critical to any great undertaking of the church, especially a major paradigm shift to becoming an equipping church. Several prayer emphases occurred during the project, primarily in the first half of the intervention. The focus on prayer had a positive influence on people's view of ministry and God's call on their lives.

The first half of the project included significant development in the hospitality ministry. Greeter teams were organized and a welcome center established to help the church welcome guests appropriately. *Assimilation* maintained the highest position of strength throughout the project, jumping to 4.16 by the time of Survey II.

Biblical foundations moved from the fourth highest outcome in terms of strength to third by the time of Survey II. People clearly thought that the first months of the project had firmly established the biblical basis for equipping ministry. *Discovery* also made significant increases during the first half of the project. Starting as the sixth highest rated outcome, O6 improved to fifth place by Survey II, scoring 3.75.

The fact that all nine outcomes improved significantly between Surveys I and II indicates a strong positive correlation with the equipping principles of the model

implemented early on and the progress made toward becoming an equipping church. Strong implementation in the initial stages established momentum to help the church continue to develop appropriate equipping structure and strategies in the latter half of the project. The church will be able to continue to build on this foundation.

Equipping Became Embedded in the Church's Culture

Comparing the results of those who took all three surveys (n=57) shows significant progress in all outcomes between the first measurement, and the second and third measurements. *Equipping culture* also saw significant increase for this group between Surveys II and III.

Significant progress between each measurement among multiple survey respondents in the fundamental outcome of *Culture* is very positive. Those who participated in every evaluative measurement expressed that culture was more strongly affected by the intervention than other outcomes. Culture is the most foundational element of the equipping model. All other outcomes rely on equipping being embedded in the culture of the church. If no other outcome had been achieved, the change in the equipping culture would have made the intervention successful. Growth in equipping culture creates the atmosphere in which structural change can occur. "The assessment of your current culture can take time. Yet deep, lasting change and overall church health require an ongoing proactive effort to assess and build your internal culture" (Mallory and Smith 92).

Mallory and Smith caution against overemphasizing culture and underemphasizing the systems required to become an equipping church. Culture and systems must go hand in hand. "Equipping ministry requires building both the culture and system together.. . . The work of shifting your church culture toward an equipping vision

and the task of building and implementing a system have to happen simultaneously" (77). However, if one tries to implement new structures without the appropriate "atmospheric conditions" of equipping in place, people will strongly resist structural changes. "Your church's culture powerfully determines people's actions and their acceptance or rejection of new things" (61). The fact that equipping culture improved between both measurements for those who took all three surveys is a strong indicator that the church is willing to accept the structural changes now occurring and that will continue to occur in the months and years ahead. The implementation of the equipping model increased the level of commitment to equipping culture within the congregation.

The Treatment of the Equipping Model Was Accurate and Effective

The respondents' scores increased significantly for all nine factors between Survey I and Surveys II and III. The first half of the project's implementation concentrated on the cultural changes needed to make equipping ministry pervasive and successful. However, even the structural components of the model, the aspects of assimilation, biblical foundations, discovery, placement, training, and recognition, saw significant improvement. The church's culture was shifted toward an equipping vision and building the system of equipping simultaneously, which is crucial for success (Mallory and Smith 77). The embedding of equipping in the culture is seen in the significant increase in the score for Outcome 1—*Culture* in the last half of the project for those who took all three surveys. The overall increase in the score of five outcomes for all respondents between Surveys II and III, particularly the structural, visible factors, such as biblical foundations, discovery, and placement, indicates continued growth toward becoming an equipping church during the latter phase of the model's implementation.

Ministry teams started out in the middle as the fifth highest rated of the nine outcomes. By the end of the project, O2 dropped to the sixth highest outcome. One reason this outcome dropped from fifth to sixth highest may be some of the changes made in the area of worship. At the outset, those in involved in leading worship functioned in teams. They met at least monthly to prepare for worship leading and prayer. But at the time of the second survey, the worship teams went through structural changes that left some members feeling misplaced. The sense of being on a "team" may have diminished for some of those serving in this area. However, survey respondents displayed significant progress in their understanding and experience of ministry teams throughout both halves of the project.

By the end of the project, servants in several areas of ministry within the church identified themselves as a team with a unified vision and purpose within the overall mission of the church. The "Ministry Workshop" intentionally sought to bring these units together for vision casting, team building, and fellowship. Over fifty people participated in the event. Unfortunately, due to weather, the event was postponed until after the completion of Survey III. Groups such as children's workers, nursery staff, hospitality workers, and sound and stage crew have begun functioning as ministry teams in more intentional and cohesive ways.

The leadership structure was reorganized during the project as part of building teams and integrating roles; however, the restructuring did not take effect until February 2003, just one month before the end of the project. The full implications of the administrative changes will only be realized in the months to come.

Adding positions of equipping leader and an equipping core team to the leadership structure significantly increased the focus on equipping in the life of the

church. However, the church is still in the process of developing and clarifying the core team's role, including the oversight of ministry connectors and recognition. These two components are vital to the model and have not yet been fully implemented.

During the project, the church also increased pastoral staff. The church transitioned from having a part-time to a full-time associate pastor with the responsibility for coaching laypeople in equipping ministry. The first priority of the new staff member's job description was to equip laity to serve within their appropriate areas of ministry. The model clearly improved the respondents' perceptions that ministry teams are vital and functioning in the life of the church. Continued developments are needed to help this component realize its full potential for bringing people together in community around ministry roles based on gifts.

Outcome 3—*Support Systems* increased significantly between Survey I and Surveys II and III. One of the key components of building support systems is the development of ministry descriptions for every area of ministry within the church. The equipping core team has been working diligently on this for the final months of the project. However, due to changes in leadership and other factors, the descriptions were in process but not fully completed by the end of the project. The descriptions are necessary to help people have a clear idea of what is expected of them in their areas of ministry. The church will need to continue to develop this component of *Support systems*.

The data reflects that Outcome 4—*Assimilation* increased significantly over the course of the project. Although no significant increase occurred in this area between Surveys II and III, the overall mean score increased, and this outcome remained the highest scoring of all nine outcomes. The survey and the qualitative data indicate that the church has done particularly well assimilating new people into the congregation and

continues to improve. Leadership for hospitality was selected based on gifts in this area near the end of the study. The leaders have continued to organize a new system of welcoming people to the church and offer training to those who serve in the area of *Assimilation.*

Outcome 5—*Biblical foundations* increased more significantly than all outcomes except *Placement*, gaining nearly half a point from 3.66 to 4.13. Outcome 5 moved from the fourth highest outcome in terms of strength to third highest by the time of Survey II and second highest by Survey III. Significant increase occurred in this outcome between every measurement. Qualitative data reflects a high view of the biblical and doctrinal emphases on equipping at Valley Chapel.

Throughout the project, the congregation was called to discipleship through preaching, teaching, and small groups. Spiritual growth was promoted as normative for the Christian life. The fall 2002 "Purpose Driven Life" emphasis strongly urged believers to understand and live out their purpose, which includes their ministry. Small groups for fellowship and accountability were developed that drew many people into a closer sense of community with others from Valley Chapel. Sermons, classes, and small groups on the biblical basis of gifts and ministry were taught regularly. The church guided people in the next steps to take toward their spiritual maturity and involvement in ministry.

Clearly, the emphasis on *Biblical foundations* made a significant difference on the respondent's view of this outcome. The increase in this outcome can be directly linked to the efforts made to develop this area.

Outcome 6—*Discovery* says, "The church has a clear process for helping people discover and understand how their spiritual gifts, personality, passion, and experience combine to determine the best possible places for ministry." *Discovery* made significant

increases during the first and second halves of the project. Starting as the sixth highest rated outcome, O6 improved to fifth place by Survey II and retained its position at the time of Survey III scoring a 3.87. People generally agreed that this outcome had improved and was being realized in the church by the end of the project.

The church offered regular guidance in understanding and using spiritual gifts through its *Network* class, offered in two formats, including Sunday school (twice) and in small groups. People were encouraged in sermons, teaching, and newsletter articles to serve in areas of ministry for which they were passionate. When people have a passion for the ministries they do in the church and community, their commitment to ministry is higher. Through vision casting, people were encouraged to develop a strong sense of commitment to their ministry in the body of Christ and to serve out of a sense of calling rather than guilt or because no one else will serve. If people did not experience joy in their ministry, they were asked to determine whether they were serving in their area of gifts, passion, and calling and, if not, to consider other areas of ministry.

The data reflects that *Discovery* improved significantly due to the implementation of the equipping model. The reports back from the qualitative input also indicate people are growing spiritually through the realization of their gifts and calling and their involvement in ministry. One person made the following comment on her survey:

> I think in the last year our church has clearly developed ways to inform people of the ministries available, has provided opportunities for people to discover their gifts and what ministries would allow them to utilize those gifts, and has placed several people into new ministries in which they can serve passionately and successfully.

Outcome 7—*Placement* says, "The church has a clear process for placing people in ministry that fits their gifts, personality, passion, and experience." The outcome of *Placement*, the process that helps people identify and get involved in ministries

appropriate to them, has seen the most significant growth. At the outset, this component scored second lowest, eighth out of nine outcomes. By the end of the project, Outcome 7 moved up to seventh highest score, 3.64, and showed the largest increase overall of over half a point. The score moved from near neutral (3.0) to over 3.5, closer to agreement that this outcome was being achieved. Significant growth occurred between all three of the surveys. Obviously, this area saw dramatic improvement. More people believed they knew what ministries would benefit from their gifts. People also shared that they were becoming more familiar with how to get involved in ministry at the church. The church was beginning to identify a process for placing people in ministry.

The process of ministry placement is still in the early stages of development. Following up with people who have begun ministry by seeking their input and asking how they are doing is a growing priority. Orienting people to their ministry has begun to occur sporadically. Some ministry areas are doing well at this; others are just beginning. Nevertheless, the steps taken to implement the *Placement* component of the equipping model have definitely had a positive impact on people's view of this outcome.

Outcome 8—*Training* says, "The church has a clear process of preparing people for ministry." The equipping model component of *Training* increased significantly between Survey I and Surveys II and III; however, O8 did not increase significantly between Surveys II and III. *Training* was the lowest scoring outcome at the outset of the project (3.03) and remained the lowest scored area at the end of the project (3.29). Outcome 8 is the only area that did not improve above 3.5 on the Likert scale.

At the outset of the project, little training was offered for most of the ministries of the church. People did not have ministry descriptions and never met with their leader to discuss the nature of their roles unless the laypeople had a question or need. Throughout

the eighteen months of the project, most of the other factors had to be developed before training could be offered. Near the end of the project, a major training event was planned for everyone in ministry that was postponed until after the project due to inclement weather. Other "ministry specific" training took place near the end or just after the project completion. Training needs further development in the months to come. Developing a workable schedule that allows people to learn, grow, and participate without overburdening their schedules with meetings will continue to be an important priority.

Outcome 9—*Recognition* saw significant improvement between Survey I and Surveys II and III. Of all the model components, this will likely be the last to be fully implemented. Further results should be seen near the end of the first year of having an equipping system fully in place.

Qualitative Support

The qualitative responses regarding people's reason for being attracted to Valley Chapel were consistent on all three measurements. "Friendliness, acceptance, and care" was highest, supporting the high score for Outcome 4—*Assimilation* from the quantitative data. Doctrine, biblical teaching, and preaching were also noted as significant reasons for coming to the church, which supports the data regarding the increase in the score of *Biblical foundations* throughout the intervention. People also appreciated the kinds of ministries offered and the service of people within the body to each other and to newcomers.

The input from "general comments and feedback" showed that at the time of Survey I, many respondents were not sure how to serve or get involved in ministry. Survey I also had a higher percentage of negative responses overall regarding lay

ministry and equipping. Surveys II and III showed an increase in frequency of positive comments about equipping. Many referred to improvements they saw in regard to spiritual gifts, lay ministry, and the processes available for getting involved. Each survey included critical comments that indicate some did not feel the church had made significant progress in becoming an equipping church. The church must continue teaching and guiding people in equipping; however, the overall view conveyed was that equipping principles were being understood and applied in the life of the church.

The other qualitative component of the research was interviews of six ministry leaders following the intervention. The ministry leaders' responses consistently reveal they perceived that equipping had become important in the life of the church. They were personally satisfied with their understanding of spiritual gifts and passion and knew what ministries benefited from them. They felt fulfilled in their ministries. Ministry leaders found that more people knew how to get involved in ministry and were doing so. They recognized the need for continued improvement, but they believed the church to be headed in the right direction in regard to equipping ministry.

Relation to Previous Studies

No known prior study exists that quantitatively measured the outcomes of an equipping model; however, *The Equipping Church Guidebook*, published by Zondervan for Leadership Network, represents a very significant volume of qualitative information. The authors write, "This guidebook is . . . an organized journal of the ideas, practices, and movements of God that we have seen in some of the healthiest, most innovative churches in North America" (Mallory and Smith 11). The *Guidebook* presents significant data from successful "equipping churches" that have wrestled through the cultural and practical issues of how to live out the biblical mandate of the "priesthood of all

believers." The insights that contribute to the *Guidebook* arise from years of research, reflection, application of equipping insights, struggles, and even failures of numerous churches:

> This book translates what was found in these healthy and innovative models into transferable principles, examples, questions, and exercises to help other church leaders build an equipping ministry that is tailored to meet the needs and calling of their own church. (13)

Mallory and Smith identified several factors common to successful equipping churches in *The Equipping Church Guidebook.* First, key leaders valued the significance of equipping ministry and laid the groundwork to develop equipping ministry in churches through vision casting, culture shifting, and personal modeling of equipping values. Second, these leaders hired or appointed a primary leader of equipping ministry with the appropriate gifts to oversee the development of equipping ministry. Finally, key leaders facilitated the development of systems to help people follow sequential steps from coming to faith to spiritual growth to being equipped for and involved in ministry (13).

The *Guidebook's* equipping model provides a framework for developing an equipping church based on the input from numerous churches experienced in successful equipping ministry. The *Guidebook* seeks to "help churches learn from each other as they begin to implement equipping ministry" (Mallory and Smith 19). This research's relation to the *Equipping Guidebook* is that it attempts to quantify the results of what other churches have experienced qualitatively. The intervention of the equipping model, which was based on qualitative data from numerous other churches, succeeds in quantifying the results, validating the qualitative information in one particular location.

Implications

The implementation of the equipping model increased the awareness of and

commitment to equipping by the pastor, leadership, and members of the congregation. The results of the study show the church grew in its understanding and experience of equipping at the cultural and organizational levels. The church will need to continue to live out its growing cultural value of equipping in new and intentional ways in regard to the systems and structures that make equipping possible. The foundation of equipping culture is present but could be eroded by failure to realize the full implications of the model in every facet of congregational life. The staff and lay leaders must continue to model and elevate equipping as a priority in the life of the church.

Pastors and other church leaders who desire to develop equipping churches must give significant time and attention to the cultural foundation of equipping. The biblical basis must be thoroughly explored and communicated. As congregations take ownership of equipping at the cultural level, they will be able to progress through the systemic changes necessary to make equipping pervasive and effective in the life of their churches. The results of becoming an equipping church include greater involvement in ministry by well-prepared and highly committed laypeople. Pastors will find more satisfaction from focusing their energies on helping others fulfill their ministry calling rather than doing the preponderance of ministry themselves. The church's health, maturity, and ability to fulfill its purpose will be greatly enhanced. Ultimately, equipping churches will reflect the biblical model of the priesthood of all believers.

Theological Reflection

Ephesians 4:11-13, 1 Peter 4:10, Romans 12:4-8, and 1 Corinthians 12 lay the biblical groundwork for equipping ministry. These passages convey that each person in the body of Christ is important. Every believer has been given a spiritual gift to be utilized in service to Christ. Ministry is not limited to the "professional Christian" but is

required of everyone who belongs to the family of God. Among the people of God some have been called and gifted for leadership; however, those with leadership gifts do not supercede or negate the service of others based on different kinds of gifts. Rather, the leadership gifts are given in order to enable, encourage, and prepare others to fulfill their ministry roles.

Throughout Church history, great movements of God have often been lay led. However, the Church tends toward becoming "clergy dependent" or "ordained dominant' in regard to ministry. Even the Reformation did not completely overcome the unbiblical approach to ministry that elevates the ordained to "superior" status and relegates the laity to an "inferior" role. Hopefully, clergy and laity alike are learning to view their roles differently from the prevailing views of Church history. All have been called and gifted to serve, not according to tradition, but according to God's will and purposes for all his followers. This research verifies that the priesthood of all believers is biblical, desirable, and possible in the church today.

Moving from the theological concept to real-life implementation is imperative. The research shows that making the priesthood of all believers a reality requires a change both in the culture and systems of churches. Such changes require courageous and sensitive leadership. Often the pastors need to change first. They must realize the value of laypeople for service and be willing to release their tight rein on ministry. This can be challenging because it often takes more time to invest in others and train them for ministry than to do the job yourself. Patient persistence will yield amazing results. The whole body "will be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:12b-13).

The laypeople will have to change their thinking and behavior as well. As they begin to sense their God-given giftedness for ministry, they will need to put their gifts into practice. They will need to take responsibility for ministry seriously and not leave it up to the pastor alone. "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others" (1 Pet. 4:10).

For equipping to occur, intentional systems must be designed to prepare people for ministry. Equipping does not take place automatically without thought and careful planning. In order for people to understand their spiritual gifts someone must teach them. In order for people to enter into ministry someone must explain how to get involved. Equipping people for ministry should be part of an intentional discipleship process that includes leading people to Christ, teaching them to live by God's Word (discipleship), and helping them to discover their gifts and experience the joy of serving.

Points of resistance to these changes will be experienced. Some may not want to get involved. Others may not feel they are gifted. Some of the qualitative responses from the surveys indicate a low view of lay ministry. Some people equate "ministry" with someone specially ordained. They do not feel God could call them to serve. They do not view their service as an important and significant contribution to the body of Christ. Nevertheless, continuing to lay the theological and biblical foundation for equipping culture and developing the systems to make equipping real in the church are essential. The fruit of the change will include eager and willing participants in ministry and a more mature body of Christ.

Contributions to Research Methodology

The main contribution of this research is that it utilizes quantitative methods to verify prior qualitative propositions regarding equipping ministry. Researchers enter

studies with bias toward particular results for which they are looking. I anticipated a positive relationship between the equipping model and becoming an equipping church for theological and practical reasons. The qualitative data from the *Equipping Guidebook* indicates that the equipping model works. As the pastor of the congregation, remaining fully disconnected and objective was not possible; however, by utilizing an instrument that quantified results numerically, I could gain objectivity about the results of the research. The results verified my hypothesis about equipping laypeople for ministry. Without suggesting one method is better than the other, the quantitative research makes the qualitative approach even more convincing.

Another contribution of the research is that it suggests further research on equipping laity for ministry would benefit from a longitudinal design and a mid-test. The study included implementation of numerous aspects of an equipping model over eighteen months. At the mid-test, all outcomes had seen significant change. By the posttest, five outcomes had seen further significant development. A shorter time span or a pretest/posttest only design would have reduced the results of this study.

Limitations

The time frame of the study is one of its limitations. Implementing an equipping system adequately can take from three to five years. Though Valley Chapel made significant progress, more development and evaluation of the model is necessary. At the conclusion of the study, the equipping process was just getting underway, not coming to an end. Equipping must continue to be promoted and reinforced so it becomes the way we function in every aspect of congregational life. Equipping will need constant promotion, evaluation, and adjustment to be successful.

Another limitation is the significant change in respondents from one measurement

to the other. Only fifty-seven people took all three surveys. Some people took two of the surveys, and others only took one survey. Measuring individual progress is difficult under such circumstances; however, the goal of this project was to look at the experience and progress of the whole church as a group. Therefore, the research is valuable.

The research showed that the multiple survey respondents changed significantly in every area between Survey I and II but only in one area between Survey II and Survey III. In contrast, all respondents together changed significantly in five outcomes between Surveys II and III, and those new to the church changed significantly in seven of the outcomes in the second half of the study. One possibility for this difference may be that the repetition of the survey for those who completed it three times diminished their perceptions of growth in equipping. If so, this would suggest that a mid-test may not be the most productive approach.

Another significant limitation to this study is that it only implemented and evaluated the equipping model at one location. Though the participation level of regular attendees was high for all three instruments (around 75 percent), a stronger study may have been possible if multiple churches had participated in the study.

The instrument may have had a limitation for Outcome 8—*Training.* This was the only outcome that saw minimal growth (though still significant). In reviewing the questions pertaining to O8 at the conclusion of the research, a potential flaw in the instrument for that outcome was noticed. One reason that *Training* may have scored so low is the way two of the five statements that measured this outcome were worded. One statement was, "People are required to undergo training before participating in ministry" (see Appendix C, Part II, Question 8 [worded in reverse]). At the outset of the study, most respondents would have disagreed or strongly disagreed with that statement because

little or no formal training was offered at that time. The intent of the project at the outset of the survey was to require training for everyone in ministry. However, as the project unfolded, the fact that specific training was not needed for every ministry was realized. Some training is formal, but much is informal on-the-job training. Therefore the question does not pertain to the outcome in the way envisioned at the time the survey was created. By the final survey, people may still have disagreed with the statement, but the outcome may have been realized in ways other than formal training.

The second statement on the survey that may have adversely affected how Outcome 8 scored was, "People receive yearly evaluations for their ministry" (see Appendix C, Part II, Question 44). At the outset of the project the intent was to incorporate ministry evaluations as part of the equipping process. However, through the course of the project, the determination was made that evaluation of ministry does not necessarily require a formalized written evaluative document completed by a supervisor, which is something the statement implies. The statement may have confused respondents because it suggests evaluation is similar to a yearly work review in a more formal employment setting. This is not the intent of ministry evaluation. Respondents would likely have answered the question pertaining to evaluations as "disagree" or "strongly disagree," negatively affecting the entire outcome.

Another limitation is that there was not a consistent age range. Eighteen to twenty-year-olds were not included on Survey I, though they were on Surveys II and III. Including this age group from the beginning would have been beneficial and would have kept the demographic material more consistent.

Unexpected Conclusions

The fact that all nine outcomes experienced significant growth between the pre-

and mid-tests was pleasantly surprising. The expectation was that the results would show growth in the more foundational aspects, such as *Equipping culture* and *Support systems* in the first half of the project and that the structural outcomes would show improvement in the latter half of the project.

Discovering that some of the equipping principles already existed at Valley Chapel was also encouraging. *Equipping culture* and *Assimilation* were particularly strong. This should not have been a surprise because the church had promoted equipping values through the development of its purpose for several years. The church had not identified intentional structures and processes to equip people for ministry. Mallory and Smith suggest, "Most churches will already have islands of strength and health in the area of equipping ministry" (62). Church leaders who desire to implement an equipping paradigm should be able to identify a few or possibly several areas that already embody the value of equipping in the life of their churches.

Another surprise was the significantly high impact that people's relationships within the church had on their view of equipping. The data shows that in general, the higher the number of significant relationships people have in the church, the higher their view of equipping. The reverse may actually be the case. The higher the people's view of equipping, the more significant relationships they have with others within the church. Equipping places people in the context of a team with the purpose of ministry. Likely, the more people were equipped for ministry, the more significant relationships they developed with others in the church in order to fulfill their ministry.

Practical Applications

One application of this project is that it can be a starting point for future quantitative research in the area of equipping laity for ministry. Others can adapt and

refine the research instrument to meet the needs of their particular situation. Developing a broader range of results by studying the equipping model in a variety of congregations, communities, and denominations would be beneficial. This would determine the effectiveness of the model across a wider context.

Another application of the research would be to develop a plan for application of the equipping model across a larger group within my own denomination. A district-wide application of the equipping model to several churches could serve to strengthen equipping ministry in a particular region. Churches and leaders could learn from one another's experience utilizing a peer-mentoring model.

The results of the study from this church context could be utilized to develop training for other church leaders, particularly of smaller churches. A weakness of *The Equipping Guidebook* is that it draws examples primarily from larger churches. Much of the material was geared toward the large church. A day-long seminar approach for pastors and other church leaders from smaller churches could be developed.

While the presentation of the book is meaningful and helpful to churches of any size, the scope of the material could be overwhelming to pastors and other church leaders from smaller ministry contexts. Adapting the materials of the *Equipping Guidebook* for churches of fewer than two hundred while utilizing the basic concepts of the equipping model could potentially transform many smaller churches. The task could be daunting if churches have remained small because of their commitment to the "pastor as sole minister" paradigm. In contexts where the pastor is seen as a chaplain to the faithful, transforming the culture to an equipping mind-set could be especially challenging.

Conclusion

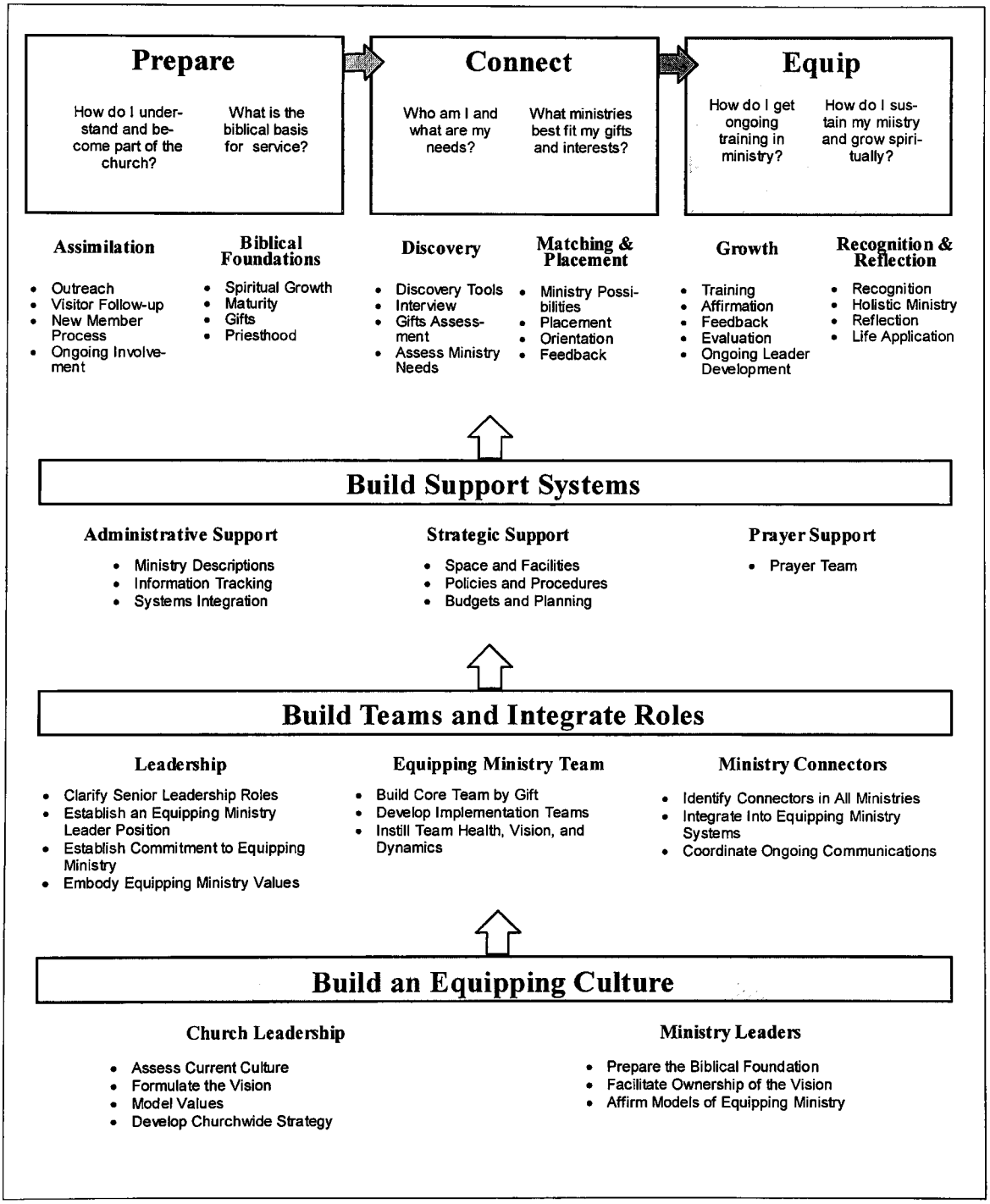
The application of the equipping model to Valley Chapel Free Methodist Church

yielded significant results for the pastor and laypeople alike. As pastor, I am more strongly committed to my mission to "equip the saints for the work of ministry." The goal of equipping is not to fill ministry slots in the life of the church. The reason for equipping is to produce spiritual maturity in believers and biblical health in the community of believers. Though Valley Chapel has plenty of room for further progress, the church has taken significant steps toward becoming an equipping church through this project. "God has created a new movement of equipping churches that prepare people according to their calling and gifts to be salt and light in their churches, communities, workplaces, families—in the whole of society" (Mallory and Smith 346). Becoming a small part of this movement has been a gratifying challenge that will continue to impact this church and community for Christ.

APPENDIX A

The Equipping Church Model

(Mallory and Smith 65)



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APPENDIX B

Outcomes of the Equipping Church Model

1. *Equipping Culture:* The church demonstrates an equipping culture.
2. *Ministry Teams*: Ministry teams consist of people with healthy relationships who clearly understand their role within the mission, vision, and values of the church.
3. *Support Systems*. The church has defined functioning support systems for administration, strategy, and prayer.
4. *Assimilation*: The church has a clearly defined process for assimilation.
5. *Biblical Foundations*: The church has a strong biblical foundation for understanding the basis for service and a process for helping people grow into Christian maturity.
6. *Discovery*: The church has a clear process for helping people discover and understand how their spiritual gifts, personality, passion, and experience combine to determine the best possible places for ministry.
7. *Placement*: The church has a clear process for placing people in ministry that fits their gifts, personality, passion, and experience.
8. *Training*: The church has a clear process of preparing people for ministry.
9. *Recognition*: The church provides intentional opportunities for recognizing its ministry volunteers and helping them reflect on their ministry.

APPENDIX C

Equipping Ministry Survey

Part I. Demographic Information

1. In order to assure complete anonymity, please fill in the following spaces to create your own personal code:
   The first initial of your mother's maiden name __
   The last four digits of your Social Security Number __ __ __ __

2. Your Age: _____

3. Gender: __ Female
   __ Male

4. Marital Status:

   __ Single
   __ Married
   __ Divorced
   __ Widowed

5. Your children: __ Number
   __ Number living at home

6. How many years have you attended this church? (If less than one year, please respond with "under 1 year."):

   _____

7. What is your relationship to the church?

   __ Attending Member
   __ Attending Non-member

8. What attracted you to this church? _____

_____

9. What events or programs do you participate in on a regular basis (twice/month or more)? Check all that apply.

__ Worship services
__ Sunday school
__ Small group (home groups, women's group, men's group, 3-D, Bible study)
__ Prayer meeting
__ Other_____

10. What ministries do you currently serve in? (Check all that apply.)

__ Leadership (Leadership Team, Pastor's Cabinet, Age-level Directors, etc.)
__ Worship (worship team, special music, worship leader, etc.)
__ Sunday school (teachers, assistants, record keeping, etc.)
__ Small group (home groups, women's group, 3-D, Bible study, prayer, etc.)
__ Children's ministry other than Sunday school (Vacation Bible School, Beginner/Junior Church, Kid's Choir, etc.)
__ Hospitality (ushers, greeters, attendance, etc.)
__ Congregational Care (Sonshine Meals, hospital visitation, etc.)
__ Youth ministry other than Sunday school
__ Other_____

11. How many significant relationships do you have with people from this church? In other words, with how many people from this church do you associate regularly as friends outside of church functions?

__ 0-1
__ 2-3
__ 4-5
__ 6-10
__ 11 or more

12. How many significant relationships do you have with people outside the church who are not part of a church? In other words, with how many people do you associate regularly as friends in social settings other than your place of employment who do not participate in any church?

__ 0-1
__ 2-3
__ 4-5
__ 6-10
__ 11 or more

Part II. Survey

Please respond to each statement below by marking only on an exact number between 1 and 5. A response of 1 indicates strong disagreement with the statement. A response of 2 indicates disagreement with the statement. A response of 3 indicates a neutral or unsure response to the statement. A response of 4 indicates agreement with the statement. A response of 5 indicates strong agreement with the statement. Please read statements carefully because some statements are worded positively and some are worded negatively.

1. The mission, vision, and values of this church are clear to most attenders.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

2. People are selected for leadership based primarily on their spiritual gifts.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

3. Prayer is rarely emphasized in the life of this congregation.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

4. The church cares about reaching new people.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

5. This church has helped my relationship with Christ to grow.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

6. The church offers regular guidance in understanding and using spiritual gifts.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

7. People know what ministries are available in the life of the church that would benefit from their spiritual gifts.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

8. People are not required to undergo training before participating in ministry.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

9. People are recognized and appreciated for their service by staff and team leaders.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

10. This church emphasizes the importance of every believer having a ministry.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

11. Ministry teams place a priority on having healthy relationships among the team members.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

12. People have a clear idea of what is expected of them in their areas of ministry.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

13. Visitors are made to feel welcome and comfortable in our worship services.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

14. Spiritual gifts are not emphasized at this church.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

15. People are passionate about their area(s) of service in the church.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

16. People do not know how to get involved in ministry in the church.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

17. People get regular feedback about their effectiveness in ministry.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

18. People are growing spiritually due to their involvement in ministry.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

19. The church does not have a clear strategy to help people develop and grow spiritually.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

20. I now serve or would like to serve on a ministry team.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

21. Communication is strong within this church regarding the various ministries of the church.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

22. The process for becoming a member of this church is not clearly known.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

23. The biblical basis for every believer having a ministry is important to this church.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

24. People care deeply about and are committed to their ministry in the life of the church.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

25. People are seldom asked how they are doing in their ministry.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

26. People are satisfied with the level of guidance they receive for their area of ministry.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

27. Some people are over involved in ministry.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

28. The biblical basis for helping people discover their gifts and ministry is taught and practiced at this church.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

29. Ministry teams clearly understand their roles in light of the overall mission, vision, and values of the church.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

30. There are numerous opportunities for getting involved in ministry.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

31. Helping people get involved in the life of this church is a priority.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

32. This church helps people understand the next steps to take toward spiritual maturity.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

33. People often do ministry because no one else will do it or because they feel guilty.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

34. The church has a clear process for helping place people in ministry.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

35. People are affirmed for the ways in which they serve in ministry.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

36. People often feel burned out by the ministries in which they serve.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

37. Every Christian is called to minister and has a ministry.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

38. Ministry teams are not highly valued and encouraged in our church.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

39. Leaders obviously strive to remove all barriers from people serving in ministry.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

40. There are numerous ways to get to know others on a personal basis at this church.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

41. This church offers clear biblical guidance in why, how, and where to serve.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

42. People experience great joy through their involvement in ministry at this church.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

43. When getting involved in a ministry people, receive orientation into that specific area.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

44. People receive yearly evaluations for their ministry.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

45. People feel that others care about what they do in the life of the church.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

Additional Comments and Feedback:

APPENDIX D

Interview Questions and Qualitative Summary

1. How have your views of the biblical role of the pastor and the laity developed over the last eighteen months?

2. What changes have you seen over the last eighteen months in the value Valley Chapel places on the ministry of every believer, and what are some examples of this?

3. How would you describe the process of moving people from seeker to servant at Valley Chapel?

4. Please describe how you and/or others are using their spiritual gifts, passion, and personality in ministry at Valley Chapel.

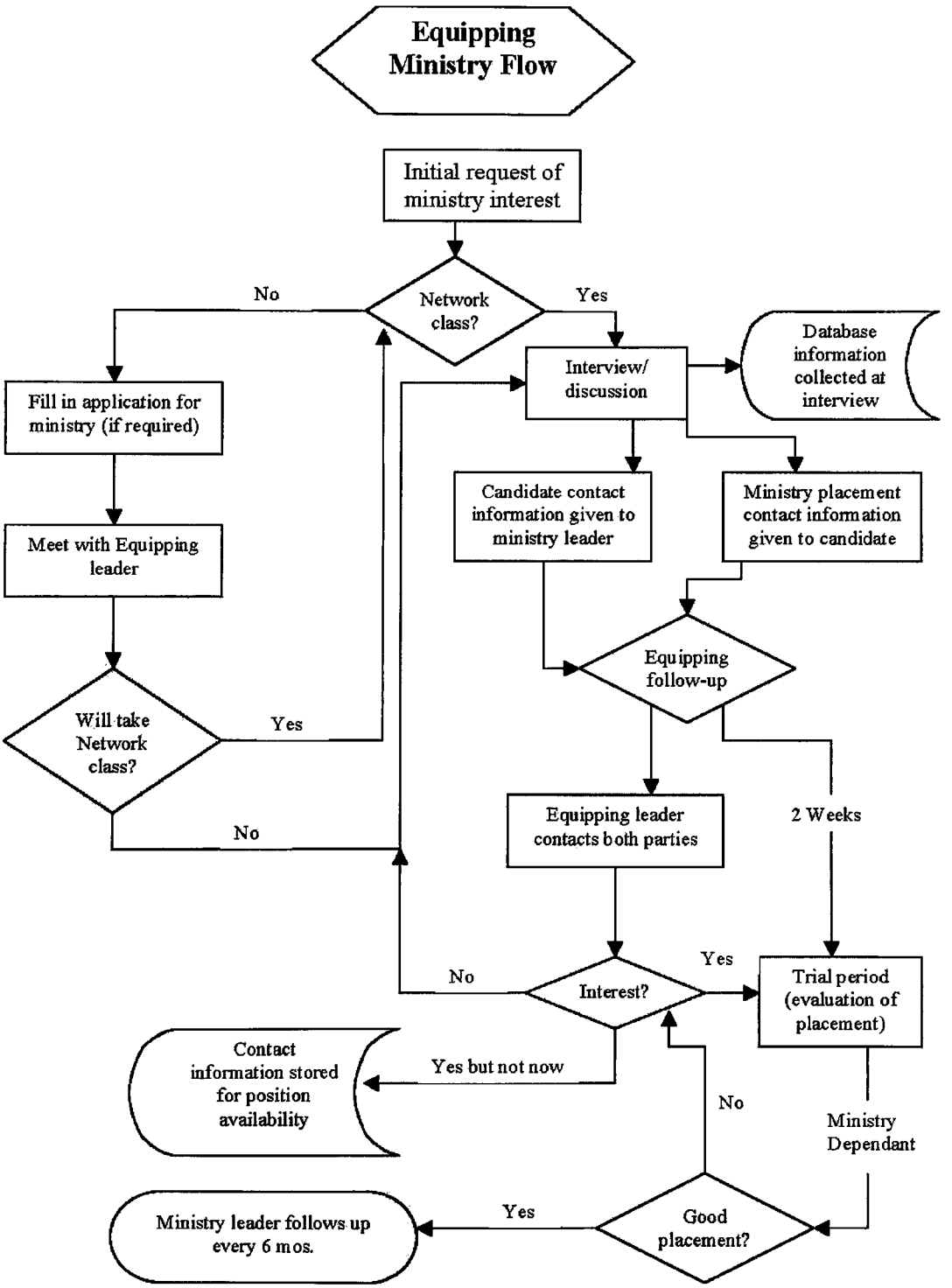
5. Looking ahead, what is one important thing you think we need to address, develop, or improve to become more of an equipping church?

Qualitative Summary

Common Equipping Characteristics	*f*
Growth in ministry of laity	39
Spiritual gifts understanding and utilization growth	28
Involvement/participation increased	27
Leadership embodies equipping	26
Passion important	17
Follow-up on expressed interests improved	16
Network class crucial/important	16
Process for developing lay ministry good/developing	15
Small group significant	9
People are serving in areas of gifting/passion	9
Church is open, loving, caring	8
Structures are in place to move people into ministry	6
Ministry is fun/exciting	6
Ministry fair is valuable	5

APPENDIX E

Equipping Ministry Flow Chart



APPENDIX F

Sample Survey Letter and Follow Up Card

Letter

Date

Dear Valley Chapel Family,

I am privileged and blessed to serve as your pastor. I am excited about how God is working through our church family to touch people's lives.

The congregation has completed two surveys as part of the research for my dissertation project. *I need your help again.* I must conduct one more survey of our regular attenders to assess our progress in becoming a church that effectively equips people for ministry. Would you please take time to carefully complete the anonymous survey and return it to the church by *Sunday March 16*? The average time required is 15 to 20 minutes. It is important to answer all the questions as best you can, including the information on Part I. Also, please read the statements in Part II carefully because some are worded positively and some are worded negatively. You may drop off completed surveys in collection boxes in the hallway outside my office or in the entryway of the church.

If you have any questions, please contact _____. I hope you will be willing to take a few minutes to complete the survey and return it to me by *March 16*. Your feedback is vital to this research and will contribute to the success of our church's ministry. Thank you in advance for your help.

In Christ,

Pastor Todd

Follow up Card

March 4, 2003

Dear Valley Chapel Family,

You recently received a survey from me that will help me compile valuable information on the ministry of Valley Chapel. If you have already completed and returned the survey to me, THANKS! If not, I appreciate your time and effort to complete the survey and return it to me by *Sunday, March 16*. There are drop off boxes in the entryway of the church and in the hallway outside my office.

If you have any questions, or if you did not get a survey, please call me at 786-5445 or pick one up at the church.

Sincerely,

Pastor Todd

APPENDIX G

Demographic Frequency Distributions

Independent Variables		Survey 1		Survey 2		Survey 3	
		N=123	Percent	N=135	Percent	N=163	Percent
Age	18-40	40	33.1	49	37.1	70	43.5
	41-60	60	49.6	62	47.0	73	45.3
	61+	21	17.4	21	15.9	18	11.2
Gender	Female	83	67.5	87	64.4	101	62.0
	Male	40	32.5	48	35.6	62	38.0
Marital status	Single	5	4.1	18	13.3	26	16.0
	Married	103	83.7	101	74.8	119	73.0
	Divorced	8	6.5	11	8.1	11	6.7
	Widowed	7	5.7	5	3.7	7	4.3
Children home	0	70	56.9	83	62.9	83	50.9
	1+	53	43.1	49	37.1	80	49.1
Years attend VC	0-1	25	20.3	25	18.8	39	24.1
	2-4	27	22.0	30	22.6	31	19.1
	5+	71	57.7	78	58.6	92	56.8
Relation to VC	Member	49	39.8	60	44.4	60	36.8
	Attender	74	60.2	74	54.8	103	63.2
Participate	0-1	48	39.0	43	31.9	46	28.2
	2-3	62	50.4	81	60.0	101	62
	4+	13	10.6	11	8.1	16	9.8
Serve	0	40	32.5	42	31.1	54	33.1
	1-2	57	46.3	59	43.7	68	41.7
	3+	26	21.1	34	25.2	41	25.2
Relations in church	0-1	34	27.6	22	16.3	27	16.7
	2-3	28	22.8	19	14.1	29	17.9
	4-5	20	16.3	32	23.7	45	27.8
	6+	41	33.3	62	45.9	61	37.7
Relations in commun-ity	0-1	23	19.0	24	17.0	34	21
	2-3	25	20.7	28	20.7	28	17.3
	4-5	27	22.3	35	25.9	39	24.1
	6+	46	38.0	48	35.6	61	37.7

APPENDIX H

Survey I Variable Differences

Individual Variable		Factor	Mean	*p*
Gender	Female	O3	3.72	.03
	Male		3.52	
	Female	O7	3.21	.00
	Male		2.92	
	Female	O8	3.11	.05
	Male		2.93	
Age	18-40	O7	3.23	.04
	41-60		3.01*	
	61+		3.24	
Years Attending	0-1	O1	3.41*	.02
	2-4		3.75	
	5+		3.73	
	0-1	O2	3.28*	.02
	2-4		3.61	
	5+		3.58	
	0-1	O3	3.39*	.01
	2-4		3.70	
	5+		3.74	
	0-1	O4	3.56*	.00
	2-4		3.93	
	5+		4.00	
Participation	0-1	O2	3.40*	.02
	4+		3.82	
Service	0	O2	3.33*	.01
	1-2		3.60	
	3+		3.67	
	0	O4	3.74*	.04
	1-2		3.99	
Relationships in church	0-1	O4	3.68	.02
	4-5		3.96*	
	6+		4.02*	

* Indicates means that are different at the .05 level using Duncan's post hoc test.

APPENDIX I

Survey II Variable Differences

Variables		Factor	Mean	*p*
Years attending	0-1	O1	3.81	.05
	5+		4.08*	
	0-1	O2	3.51*	.03
	2-4		3.74	
	5+		3.79	
	0-1	O3	3.59*	.00
	2-4		3.93	
	5+		3.95	
	0-1	O5	3.73*	.02
	5+		4.07	
Service	0	O1	3.82*	.00
	1-2		4.02*	
	3+		4.21*	
	0	O2	3.56*	.00
	1-2		3.79	
	3+		3.90	
	0	O3	3.74*	.04
	3+		3.98	
	0	O5	3.80*	.02
	1-2		4.02	
	3+		4.11	

* Indicates means that are different at the .05 level using Duncan's post hoc test.

Variables		Factor	Mean	*p*
Number of relationships in church	0-1	O1	3.83*	.04
	6+		4.12	
	0-1	O4	3.91*	.05
	2-3		4.16	
	4-5		4.20	
	6+		4.22	
	0-1	O5	3.63*	.01
	2-3		3.99	
	4-5		3.99	
	6+		4.08	
	0-1	O6	3.45*	.01
	2-3		3.81	
	4-5		3.77	
	6+		3.83	
	0-1	O7	3.27	.02
	2-3		3.75*	
	4-5		3.40	
	0-1	O9	3.27*	.04
	2-3		3.55	
	4-5		3.56	
	6+		3.57	

* Indicates means that are different at the .05 level using Duncan's post hoc test.

APPENDIX J

Survey III Variable Differences

Variables		Factor	Mean	*p*
Church relationship	Member	O1	4.22	.05
	Attender		4.07	
	Member	O2	4.03	.00
	Attender		3.78	
Children	0	O1	4.03	.01
	1+		4.23	
	0	O4	4.11	.02
	1+		4.27	
Participation	0-1	O1	3.95*	.01
	2-3		4.19	
	4+		4.24	
	0-1	O2	3.64*	.00
	2-3		3.93	
	4+		4.15	
	0-1	O5	3.93*	.00
	2-3		4.20	
	4+		4.28	
Service	0	O1	4.01	.02
	3+		4.28*	
	0	O2	3.72	.00
	3+		4.07*	
Relationships in church	0-1	O1	3.93*	.00
	2-3		4.23	
	4-5		3.99*	
	6+		4.26	
	0-1	O2	3.61*	.00
	2-3		3.98	
	4-5		3.76*	
	6+		4.01	
	0-1	O3	3.78	.02
	2-3		4.02*	
	6+		4.08*	
	0-1	O4	4.01	.04
	6+		4.28*	
	0-1	O5	3.90*	.00
	2-3		4.21*	
	4-5		4.04†	
	6+		4.26*†	

* Indicates means that are different at the .05 level using Duncan's post hoc test.
† Indicates means that are different at the .05 level using Duncan's post hoc test.

APPENDIX K

Survey Qualitative Summary

Survey I Attraction to Church

Responses	*f*
Friendliness/acceptance/care	33
FM/Doctrine/Biblical preaching and teaching	26
Music/worship style	17
Other general	14
Ministries/service	13
Friends/family/people/fellowship	9

Survey I Other Responses

Responses	*f*
Not sure how to serve	6
General positive comments	5
Would like to get involved	4
Church is welcoming/accepting	4
Church is not friendly	2
More prayer emphasis desired	2
Serve out of guilt/pressure	2
General negative comments	1

Survey II Attraction to Church

Responses	*f*
Friendliness/acceptance/care	46
Friends/family/people/fellowship	35
FM Doctrine/Biblical preaching and teaching	32
Music/worship style	25
Other general	23
Ministries	11

Survey II Other Responses

Responses	*f*
Evident improvement in equipping principles	20
General negative comments	5
Church is welcoming/caring	4
General positive comments	4
Church is not supporting/caring	3
Training, relationships, systems need development	3
Willing to get more involved	2

Survey III Attraction to Church

Responses	*f*
Friendliness/acceptance/care	51
FM Doctrine/Biblical preaching and teaching	36
Friends/family/people/fellowship	31
Music/worship style	25
Ministries	18
Other general	13

Survey III Other Responses

Responses	*f*
Love the church, positive, God is working	16
Improvement in getting people involved	11
Equipping systems/structures need improvement	8
General positive feedback	6
General negative feedback	5
Welcoming/caring	4
Want to be more involved	2

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